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# The Effectiveness of Pre-Service Principal Preparation Programs on Instructional School Leadership in High Stakes Testing Grades

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The Effectiveness of Pre-Service Principal Preparation Programs on Instructional School  
Leadership in High-Stakes Testing Grades

Glen T. Pinder

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Education  
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**SETON HALL UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
**OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE**

**Glen Pinder**, has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the **Ed.D.** during this **Spring Semester 2017**.

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## ABSTRACT

In today's world of accountability, the preparation of school leaders has never been more critical. Many states are now developing policies and processes that seek to enhance school leadership preparation programs. Enhancing school leadership preparation programs is particularly important in the area of instructional leadership because research suggests that instructional leaders have a significant direct effect on student outcomes. The purpose of this study was to explore principals' perceptions of relationships between training in their pre-service principal preparation programs and their effectiveness as in-service instructional leaders in New Jersey schools. The study is significant because the preparation of school leaders impacts the success of their students. Twelve in-service principals participated in semi-structured interviews designed to explore their perceptions of the emphasis that their pre-service programs placed on three skills associated with effective instructional leadership: 1) setting high expectations, 2) establishing a positive school climate, and 3) instructional practice. Results of the interviews showed that while all principals used these skills in their current practice, they did not attribute their training primarily to their pre-service principal preparation programs. Instead, they relied on alternative methods of training to gain these critical skills. Based on participant responses, recommendations are made for ongoing research to improve principal preparation programs through embedded practical opportunities.

*Keywords:* instructional leadership, leadership preparation, positive school climate, establishing high expectations, instructional practices

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my deceased mother, Esther Pinder, whose love was unconditional. Her life lessons of respect and kindness have carried me further in this world than anything else.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>10</b>
Background	10
Statement of the Problem	12
Purpose of the Study	16
Research Questions	17
Study Design and Methodology	17
Significance of the Study	18
Limitations and Delimitations	18
Assumptions	19
Definition of Terms	19
Organization of the Study	20
<b>REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</b>	<b>21</b>
Historical Overview	21
Research on Leadership	22
Leadership in Educational Organizations	29
Standard-Based Leadership Preparation	36
Research on Leadership Preparation Programs	42
Instructional Leadership Preparation/Intern Experiences	51
Summary	58
<b>METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY</b>	<b>59</b>
Setting	59
Population and Sample	60
Data Collection	60
Human Subjects Protection	61
Research Design	61
Instrumentation	63
Introduction	65
Defining Leadership	65
Perceptions of pre-service	64
Content and Face Validity of Research Instruments	66
Qualitative Data Analysis	67
Summary	68
<b>Findings</b>	<b>70</b>
Findings from Initial Survey: Demographic Data	71
Findings from Reflective Survey	74



Findings from the Semi-Structured Interview	81
Research Question 1	82
Research Question 2	85
Research Question 3	89
Establishing Expectations	90
Triangulation and Themes	92
<b>Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Further Study</b>	<b>94</b>
Summary	94
Conclusions	96
Model of Effective Instructional Leadership Training (EILT)	99
Recommendations for Further Study	101
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Appendix A: Interview Protocol</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Appendix B: Demographic Survey Questions</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>Appendix C: Reflective Survey Questions</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Appendix D: HSIRB Approval</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Appendix E: Recruitment Letter</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Appendix F: Informed Consent</b>	<b>126</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
Table 1: Variations in Language Comparing Instructional Focus	38
Table 2: Definitions of Instructional Leadership Themes	63
Table 3: Research Codes	67
Table 3: Demographic Variables	73
Table 4: Participant Interview Data	73
Table 5: Outcomes of Reflective Survey: Establishing Expectations	75
Table 5-1: Shared Vision & Mission	75
Table 5-2: Identify goals	75
Table 5-3: Create Implement Plans	76
Table 5-4: Promote Continuous & Sustainable Improvement	76
Table 5-5: Monitor and Evaluate Progress and Revise Plans	76
Table 6: Outcomes of Reflective Survey: Positive Learning Environment	77
Table 6-1: Promote & Protect Welfare and Safety	77
Table 6-2: Teacher Organization Time for Quality Instruction	77
Table 6-3: Build & Sustain Positive Relationships	77
Table 7: Outcomes of Reflective Survey: Instructional Practices	78
Table 7-1: Develop Instructional & Leadership Capacity of Staff	78
Table 7-2: Promote the Use of Technology	78
Table 7-3: Monitor & Evaluate Instructional Programs	79
Table 7-4: Supervise Instruction	79
Table 7-5: Use or Develop Data Systems to Identify Student Strengths	79
Table 7-6: Provide Coherent & Effective Guidance	80
Table 7-7: Provide & Monitor Differentiated Teaching Strategies	80
Table 7-8: Use Aligned Standards-based Accountability Data	80
Table 7-9: Regular Analyses and Disaggregation of Data	81
Table 8: Participant Information	81

**LIST OF FIGURES**

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
Figure 1: Effective Leadership	56
Figure 2: Method of Triangulation	67
Figure 3: Triangulation of Research Findings	93
Figure 4: Model of Effective Instructional Leadership Training (EILT)	100

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Background

The academic achievement of K-12 students is one of the top concerns in America today. Although America has been on a mission to revamp its educational system since Sputnik (Powell, 2007), recent reforms such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Race to the Top (RTT), and the *Every Child Succeeds Act* (ECSA) mandate that schools make significant improvements in academic outcomes for all children (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). For school leaders, however, these mandates also highlight the importance of the role of school leadership in improving teaching and learning in schools. This is because the goals of these mandates cannot be achieved without school leaders who are prepared to meet them. That is, in today's world of accountability, the preparation of school leaders has never been more critical. In fact, only the impact of the teacher surpasses the level of influence of school leadership on student achievement (Creemers & Reezigt 1996; Seashore, Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010). To that end, many states have already developed, or are in the process of creating, new policies that will enhance administrator licensure requirements and ensure that school leaders are prepared to meet the demands of today's schools and students (Davis, 2010).

Leadership preparation has been a critical component of American education for decades. In 1987, the National Commission on Excellence in Education Administration reported on a policy study that identified several key areas of concern in leadership preparation. The report findings identified the lack of a clear definition of good leadership, an absence of collaboration between school districts and colleges and universities, poor quality of leadership candidates, irrelevance of the modern content included in preparation programs, and the need for licensure

systems that promote excellence and a national sense of cooperation (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Research on leadership preparation has also consistently identified key skillsets and attributes required to obtain success as a school leader. Along with how principals are being prepared, extensive research has been conducted to identify leadership styles that create the most effective learning environment. For instance, Burton & Vidic (2011) examined motivational correlates of four leadership styles—servant, transformational, transactional, and passive/avoidant to determine what style was most effective in creating intrinsic motivation.

However, while an extensive body of research has already identified critical components of excellent school leadership, a closer examination of what qualities actually define effective leadership is required to analyze how principals are being prepared, as well as their behaviors in their roles as school leaders. For example, leadership has been defined as supporting change or influencing others (Bellamy, Fulmer, & Muth, 2007). However, in education, the prescribed role as principal and district-wide administrator is to lead others to meet the goals and objectives set by the state and local school board. True leadership is definitely not just “making things happen” or exercising a “strong influence over others” since individuals with good management skills can accomplish these tasks. These types of school leaders, often referred to as “paper shufflers,” are not visionary or courageous in their decisions. In the current educational landscape, these managerial skillsets are not reflective of any other qualities associated with great leadership, and only seek to meet bureaucratic requirements of the position.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is the premise of the current study that we must first distinguish which characteristics an effective leader possesses before there can be a discussion on how school leaders are best prepared and/or what leadership styles are best suited to meeting the challenges of today’s

educational landscape. School reform efforts are in motion nationwide in an effort to address many concerns. New mandates, such as NCLB and RTT, now require immediate and significant increases in student outcomes or school leaders are penalized by sanctions. The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) contends that only one course of action, strengthening school leadership, can control all of the concerns at once (Van Roekel, 2008).

A considerable amount of evidence has been produced over the last few decades to support the view that the principal plays a major role in the success of a school and the achievement of its students. Marzano and Waters (2009) suggested that there can be as much as 25% variance in student learning that can be attributed to school-related factors as a result of the actions of the school principal. Researchers contend that instructional leaders shape the environment in which teachers and students succeed or fail (Van Roekel, 2008). Additional research suggests that there is an equal relationship between district leadership and student achievement (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

In 2009, Marzano and Waters evaluated relationships between district-level leaders' competencies and student achievement in a district based on data from 1,210 districts, summarized in 14 reports. The computed correlation between district leadership and achievement was 0.24, and was found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Marzano and Waters (2009) applied the most common interpretations and examinations of the expected change in the dependent variable associated with a one standard deviation gain in the independent variable (Magnusson, 1966, as cited by Marzano & Waters, 2009). In the Marzano study, the independent variable was district leadership, and the dependent variable was average student achievement in the district. To interpret the correlation of 0.24, one might consider an average superintendent who was at the 50th percentile in terms of his or her leadership skills and who was leading a

district in which the average student achievement was also at the 50th percentile. If the superintendent improved his or her leadership abilities by one standard deviation, rising to the 84th percentile of all district leaders, Marzano and Waters (2009) predicted that the average student in the district would rise by 9.5% percentile points to the 59.9 percentile.

These findings support the notion that district leadership is an instrumental part of increasing student achievement (Marzano & Waters, 2009). This research debunked the notion that district leadership only absorbs costly resources without adding anything to a district's effectiveness. In contrast, according to Marzano and Waters (2009), district leaders who carried out their leadership responsibilities effectively had a positive effect on student outcomes across a district. The study conducted also sought to identify those behaviors in which district leaders engage that lead to increased student outcomes.

A secondary research question from the study conducted by Marzano and Waters (2009) examined specific behaviors of district leaders that were associated with student achievement. This study found five district leadership responsibilities and initiatives to be statistically significant, based on changes in student academic performance. According to Marzano and Waters (2009), the following district level behaviors contributed significantly to student achievement: 1) establishing and maintaining goal-setting behaviors, 2) establishing non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction, 3) creating board alignment with the support of district goals, 4) monitoring achievement of instructional, and 5) allocating resources to support the goals for achievement and instruction.

The findings of Marzano and Waters (2009) suggest that effective leadership focuses on academic outcomes or instructional leadership. However, these findings are tempered by the lived experiences of many school principals, who would like to transition from their roles as

building managers or “paper shufflers” to effective instructional leaders, but admit that this paradigm shift is often difficult because they are already overwhelmed by the sheer number of managerial and administrative tasks that consume their time and attention (Van Roekel, 2008). The challenges of finding effective instructional leaders at the principal level, defined by Pepper (2010) as school leaders who possess a skillset that includes the ability to plan and implement the use of effective instructional strategies, coupled with the management skills to maintain a smoothly run organization, are underscored by the concerns of superintendents who indicate that there is a lack of effective building leaders and a limited talent pool from which to choose. Even highly skilled and well-trained principals feel overwhelmed when faced with multiple, fast-paced challenges required for the position (Williams & Szal, 2011). As a result, university programs preparing candidates for school leadership positions are receiving increasing pressure to align programs with the realities of practice.

RTT specifically links its definitions of effective leadership and leadership preparation to student achievement growth. Researchers contend, however, that there is a gap between what principals do and what research says they should be doing (Van Roekel, 2008). It goes without saying, therefore, that the manner in which school leaders are prepared is vital for the successful future of a school leader and student achievement. Several studies have been conducted in an attempt to ascertain the type of principal preparation programs that are most effective in preparing school leaders to meet today’s challenges. Among the leading leadership preparation programs that exist today are traditional, cohort, and school district–university partnership programs. However, there is a lack of information about the capacity of current leadership preparation programs to equip instructional leadership candidates with the skills needed to be effective school leaders.



Thus, leadership preparation programs continue to produce leaders that may not have the skillset or knowledge needed to be an effective instructional leader. While different models of principal training are available, including traditional course delivery in which an individual navigates their own training with a stand-alone field experience, a cohort model in which a group of individuals participate in a sequenced training program, and school district–university partnership leadership programs in which universities provide both coursework and experiences to potential candidates in a district (Chandler, Chen, & Jiang, 2013), scant empirical literature exists about the differences between traditional, cohort, and school district–university partnership leadership preparation programs effectiveness. The importance of understanding the relationship between what is taught in leadership preparation programs and what is required to meet the needs of students in today’s accountability culture is an important step in understanding the contextual factors that impact principal preparation programs.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to conduct research that explores relationships between principal preparation programs and effective instructional leadership. For the purpose of this study, instructional leadership will be defined as school leaders who possess a skillset that includes the ability to plan and implement the use of effective instructional strategies, coupled with the management skills to maintain a smoothly run organization (Pepper, 2010). Although research has identified skillsets and attributes that are necessary for successful school leadership, researchers contend that principal preparation programs fail to prepare graduates for the role of instructional leader, especially in reference to students with disabilities (Lynch, 2012). The failure to prepare graduates for their role as instructional leaders results in the challenge of not meeting today’s mandate of increasing student achievement as principals obtain positions in the

field. There is a need, therefore, to assess the quality of principal preparation programs in preparing graduates for the role of instructional leaders who can meet the mandate of increasing student achievement. Since new mandates now require immediate and significant increases in student outcomes, or school leaders are penalized by sanctions, leadership preparation programs must effectively equip candidates with the skills needed to be successful leaders. A further examination, such as the one conducted in the current study, could offer insight on creating a successful model for principal preparation programs.

### **Research Questions**

The current study will use a qualitative, exploratory approach to research the following questions.

Research Question 1: How do in-service principals trained with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards define instructional leadership in their own practice?

Research Question 2: What are principals' perceptions of the impact of their pre-service principal preparation programs on their in-service practices as instructional leaders?

Research Question 3: What is the perception of school leaders about the degree to which three key instructional leadership functions from the ISLLC standards—supervising instructional practice, establishing a positive school environment, and establishing high expectations—were emphasized in their pre-service principal training?

### **Study Design and Methodology**

This exploratory qualitative study evaluated the perceptions of K-12 school administrators in New Jersey about their pre-service principal training and its impact on their current in-service practice as instructional leaders. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to investigate

principals' perceptions of their pre-service principal preparation programs and the impact these programs had on their success, or lack thereof, in affecting student achievement. The following sections will provide the significance of the study and a review of the existing literature.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study may be that it provides resourceful information about the impact of principal preparation programs on key skillsets required to produce effective instructional leaders. This study is significant in that a model may be developed, based on the findings of this research, to guide more effective leadership preparation programs. Using the model to guide leadership preparation programs would be advantageous to leadership preparation programs because they would have a blueprint to follow when preparing school leadership candidates to be effective instructional leaders. The findings of this study may contribute to the existing literature on the ISLLC standards (which are currently called Professional Standards for School Leaders) and their role in defining leadership skills in principal training programs. The study may also be significant to classroom teachers and educational leaders who are responsible for student achievement outcomes.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

The following limitations may be present in this study:

1. The idiosyncratic nature of an effective instructional leader. *Effectiveness* can be subjective because it has different meanings for individual readers. Thus, while this study uses the ISLLC standards as a framework for an effective instructional leader, it also notes that effectiveness is unique to an individual.
2. The results of this study are limited to the principals in the research and school leaders with similar characteristics.

## Assumptions

The following assumptions may be present in this study:

1. Those who participate in the study obtained their leadership preparation under the guide ISLLC standards published in 2008 or earlier.
2. This study reasonably assumes that participants are providing answers honestly.

## Definition of Terms

The following definitions were used in the current study.

1. *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards* are national standards for school leadership licensure programs that were developed by the National Policy Board on educational Administration and the Council of Chief State School Officers. They were developed to improve school leadership training programs (Van Meter & Murphy, 1997).
2. *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)* is a reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* of 1965. At the time of this study, this act was the principal federal law affecting education from kindergarten through high school. NCLB was designed to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps. States were required to develop challenging academic standards, to educate all students to 100% proficiency by 2014, and to create and implement a single, statewide accountability system (Klein, 2015).
3. *Effective instructional leadership*: Instructional leadership is defined by Pepper (2010) as school leaders who possess a skill set that includes the ability to plan and implement the use of effective instructional strategies, coupled with the management skills to maintain a smoothly run organization.
4. *Instructional practices*: Instructional practices include communicating and enabling a

school's vision for instructional practice, curriculum and pedagogy, instructional delivery, organizational time, and assessment and accountability systems (Council of Chief State School Officers CCSSO, 2008).

5. *Establishing expectations:* Instructional leaders establish expectations by promoting a school culture in which all school members demonstrate their beliefs that all students can achieve their highest potential and that the staff are able to facilitate their achievement (Levine & Lezotte, 1995).
6. *Positive school learning environment:* Instructional leaders promote a positive learning environment by creating a learning environment that is free of chaos and disruptive behaviors. They promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff (Kirk & Jones, 2004).

## Organization of the Study

Chapter One presented the introduction to the problem, background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, rationale, research questions, and significance of the study. It also discussed the definition of terms, assumptions, limitations, and nature of the study. The remainder of this study will be divided up as follows: Chapter Two will present a literature review of the history of effective school leadership preparation programs analysis as well as current research related to effective school leadership preparation program analysis along with a summary of the literature review. Chapter Three will detail the type of research methodology to be utilized in this study, and the appropriateness of the research design. Chapter Four will present the data collection, the data collection method, and analysis of the data. Chapter Five will present the results, conclusions, and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

#### **Historical Overview**

According to Bass (1981), the study of leadership is an ancient art. Studies of leadership appear in works that can be traced back as far as Plato, Caesar, and Plutarch. Leadership is a full-bodied concept that transpires commonly amid all people, irrespective of culture. Given this definition, theories of leadership flourish. They embrace approaches such as the great man theory, which suggests that history is shaped by the leadership of great men. According to this theory, without Moses, the Jewish nation would have remained in Egypt, and without Churchill, the British would have acquiesced to the Germans in 1940. The trait theories speak to the different qualities of leaders and their identification, and contend that leaders are endowed with superior qualities that differentiate them from followers. For instance, common traits of leaders according to this theory include knowledge of an industry or field, initiative, flexibility, confidence, and charisma (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011). Situational leadership theories assert that leaders adjust their styles based on the needs of the individuals he or she is leading. For instance, in some situations, leaders may need to tell followers a decision and then direct it while in other situations they may try to obtain buy-in to a decision from followers and then coach their followers in the implementation of a decision (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993). Regardless of the theory used to explain it, leadership has been intimately linked to the effective functioning of complex organizations throughout the centuries.

Leadership is considered to be vital to the successful functioning of many aspects of a school. One aspect of schooling in particular that has been linked to leadership in a school building is students' opportunity to learn. The 1971 U.S. Senate Committee Report on Equal

Educational Opportunity identified the principal as the single most influential person in a school (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; U.S. Department of Health, Education, & Welfare, 1971). School leadership, with the principal in the central role, is perceived to be the key to success. However, leadership practices in schools are not based on a clear, well-articulated body of research spanning decades. In fact, there has been far less research on school leadership than one might expect. For instance, Marzano et al. (2005) note that previous literature of reviews of school leadership and academic achievement only found 40 studies that examined relationships between school leadership and student achievement. Further, Marzano et al. (2005) noted that they found 69 articles that used quantitative research to examine relationships between school leadership and academic achievement during a 35-year time span. This report from Marzano et al. (2005) suggests a need for additional studies that explore relationships between school leadership and academic achievement.

### Research on Leadership

Many theories on leadership have been influential in guiding school leaders. Given the various lenses through which to view leadership, practitioners are hard-pressed to operationally define the concept of leadership. As a result, different preparation programs tend to emphasize different approaches for pre-service leaders. In clearly defining leadership, the “situational” or “contingent” nature of leadership, and the extensive focus on the measurement of trait personalities; characteristics, makes it difficult to identify the exact mechanisms of leadership development. Some theories are more challenging than others to examine, such as the passive/avoidance model of leadership. The passive/avoidance leadership is labeled as an ineffective style because of its weak and indifferent nature. According to this model, passive/avoidance leadership includes two components: laissez-faire leadership (i.e., avoidance

or absence of leadership) and management by exception (passive), where the leader waits reactively for errors to occur and then takes necessary corrective action. Due to the newness of this concept, limited empirical evidence is available for this type of leadership. However, because of the indifferent passive corrected approach, passive avoidant leadership is hypothesized to promote lower levels of intrinsic motivation compare to other leadership styles (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

Prominent theories of leadership include: Transformational, Transactional and Servant Leadership. Both transformational and transactional have their roots in the works of James Burns. He is considered the founder of modern leadership theory. Burns made a fundamental distinction between transactional and transformational. Transactional Leadership is defined as a style in which individuals typically believe that their job is to maintain the “status quo”. Transactional leadership has been demonstrated to be effective in various emergency situations where the risk of failure is high due to mortality threats and or financial costs. Leaders who demonstrate management-by-exception actively pay attention to issues that arise, set standards, and carefully monitor behavior. They are so aggressive in their management behavior that followers of this leadership style believe that they should not take risks or demonstrate initiative. Constructive transactional leadership is the most effective and active of the transactional leadership styles (Marzano et al., 2005). This type of transactional leader sets goals, clarifies desired outcomes, exchanges rewards and recognition for accomplishments, suggest or consults, provides feedback, and gives employees praise when it is deserved. The transactional leader is a process of social exchange in which rewards are given to followers in exchange for effective performance. Due to its pragmatic approach, transactional leadership is most likely effective at lower levels of management in which followers are inexperienced and thus will benefit from



order and structure. Followers are invited into the management process more than in the case with the other two styles. Followers generally react by focusing on and achieving expected performance goals (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

Transformational leadership is considered a favored style of leadership because it is assumed to produce results beyond expectations (Marzano et al., 2005). Transformational leaders form a mutual stimulation and elevation relationship that converts followers into leaders. Effective leaders and followers often determine the wellness of an organization. Effective leadership alone, however, does not guarantee the success of an organization. Another major factor that impacts a leader's effectiveness and capacity to lead its followers is an organization's structure. Vidic and Burton (2011) contends that transformational leadership is based on developing and selling a vision for what is possible, and that transformational leaders initiate change by challenging the status quo. The transformational leader should be better suited to more fluid situations that call for visionary leaders and highly committed and intrinsically motivated followers. A leader's capacity to lead its followers in an organization that is tightly coupled will have a different outcome than that of an organization that is loosely coupled (Marzano et al., 2005). Tightly-coupled can be defined as an environment which consists of domains that are typically closely related to each other and collaborate to pursue some specific common tasks. Such common tasks cannot be completed without proper interoperations, and such interoperation needs are constant and can be predefined (Zhang, 2010). *Loosely-coupled* can be defined as an environment consisting of domains that are independent of each other and are able to carry out their major functions without interoperating with each other. There are typically no specific common tasks that need to be done through interoperations of all participating domains. Instead, the interoperation needs are usually driven "on-demand" to facilitate dynamic information

sharing needs. Thus, the interoperation needs in loosely coupled environments are dynamic and may not be predefined (Zhang, 2010).

A leadership style that infuses many transactional and transformational leadership characteristics is what Greenleaf describes as Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). This leadership style proposes the notion of serving others' needs while developing future leaders. In 1970, Greenleaf entitled this leadership style as one that emphasizes the need for a leader's motivation to serve those who he or she seeks to lead. The research contends that this type of leadership is best suited for higher management levels in which followers are highly motivated and competent. The leader who seeks to utilize this approach toward leadership serves as a facilitator in providing assistance to subordinates in accomplishing organizational goals (Vidic & Burton, 2011). According to Vidic and Burton (2011), a servant leaders' main focus is on serving the needs of the followers through vision, empathy, open communication, and problem-solving; by doing so, they model the skills and provide opportunities needed for followers to become effective leaders. These servant leaders possess the intent of transforming those served to advance personally and professionally, and seek to have those served become more autonomous, and increase the likelihood of becoming servants themselves (Spears & Lawrence, 2004). The servant leader seeks to place others' needs within the organization before themselves by assuming a non-focal position within the various teams while providing the necessary resources and support without expectation of acknowledgment (Black, 2010). The research suggests that followers of servant leaders are only effective when their needs are being met; an effective servant leader understands and is sensitive to followers' needs (Rowe, 2003). According to Black (2010), servant leaders do not allow themselves to become isolated from their subordinates by layers of hierarchy; instead, they are physically present at the work site and maintain a visible

presence. Black states that one way to assess a servant leader's level of effectiveness is to observe whether their followers grow as people within the organization by becoming more autonomous. The growth-of-followers test, recommended by Greenleaf, served as the basis for his rationale behind the development of the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA; Laub, 1999). The OLA quantitatively measures the perceived servant leadership in organizations and schools. The characteristic to serve others is not defined as "doing for others" in the common sense of the word. Instead, those who employ servant leadership focus on making the person or persons served more competent to meet their own needs and better equipped to serve the organization as a whole (Black, 2010).

In 2009, Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky found that it was important to distinguish between leadership and authority. Their research proposed that there is a considerable difference from having authoritative know-how and from holding a high position in an organizational hierarchy. They went on to distinguish from having enormous informal power in forms of credibility, trust, respect, admiration and moral authority. Heifetz et al. (2009) highlighted that often times people hold positions of authority or senior leadership often do so without ever successfully leading their organization through a difficult but needed "adaptive change". In their text, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Organization of the World*, the authors highlight that others with or without significant formal authority but large admiring groups of "followers" also frequently failed to mobilize those followers to address the toughest challenges. To protect and increase their informal authority, they often pander to their constituents minimizing the costly adjustments that followers will need to make and place the requirement of change elsewhere at "the others who must change, or will be changed as they deny or delayed the day of reckoning." In an effort to better define "leadership" it is essential at this juncture that it

be distinguished between the notion of “leadership” with authority, power and influence.

Research has often viewed leadership as a practice and activity that some people do some of the time. Heifetz et al. (2009) view leadership as a verb, not a job. While necessary resources authority, power and influence can be used for all sorts of purposes and tasks that may or may not have little to do with leadership in and of itself.

The powers and influence that come from formal and informal authority relationships have the same basic structure. The social contract is identical: Party A entrust Party B with power in exchange for services. One or more people on the assumption that you will do what they want you to do then grant authority: centrally in organizational life to promptly provide solutions to problems. People will substantiate power or volunteer to follow you because they are looking for you to “provide a service, be a champion, a representative an expert who can provide solutions within the terms they understand the situation” (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 24).

Heifetz et al. (2009) assert that as long as you do what is expected of you, your authorizers are happy. This leads to expansion in the way of promotions, bonuses and a more impressive title. The most seductive way for an organization to reward compliance of carrying out mandates without question is to label you as a “leader.” The research suggests that this tactic is effective because most people aspire to have that label, and conferring it on an individual is effective in keeping them in the middle of the scope of their authority and far away from taking on adaptive leadership work that is required for effectual change. Meeting the expectations of the authorizers is important, but often in these scenarios doing an excellent job usually has nothing to do with helping the organization deal with the challenges required to realize meaningful transformations. Adaptive Leadership, as defined by Heifetz et al. (2009), emphasizes that it is not about meeting or exceeding the expectations of an authorizer, but more importantly

challenging some of those expectations and seeking ways to disappoint people without totally demoralizing the organization. The challenge is to balance the need to question the status quo of the very people who have given you your informal and or formal power authority. According to the research, by applying adaptive leadership beyond authoritative management one risks telling people what they need to hear instead of what they want to hear, but also helps the organization make the necessary progress toward addressing its complex challenges (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Other theorists propose that a closer examination of the cross section of context and leadership is required to better grasp an understanding of “leadership” practices. The traditional contingency theory, seek to merge leadership traits and situational approaches. According to the traditional contingency theory, one type of leader is more likely to be effective under one set of circumstances, while under another set of circumstances, another leader is required. The assertion that leadership effectiveness depends on the fit between the personality characteristics of a leader in the situation variables, such as task structure, position power, and subordinate skills and attitudes, may be helpful for matching a particular type of leadership to a particular situation. However, it does not take into account the dynamic nature of educational leaders’ work environments. For instance, Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) suggested that successful leaders of turnaround schools employ a core set of leadership practices in concert with each stage of school improvement. The researchers go on to add that the ways in which leaders apply their leadership practices, not the practices themselves, demonstrate responsiveness to rather than dictation by the context in which they work. Scholars agree that the context is relevant in terms of the leader behavior and its end product. Some in the field propose evidence that the significance of leaders is related to features of organizational context, such as geographic location (urban, suburban, rural), level of schooling (elementary, secondary), and district size

and poverty. This researcher suggests that there is no such thing as a “superintendency” but more appropriately “superintendencies” that are often more dissimilar than similar to each other (Leithwood, Louis, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2004). In addition, further investigations of district leadership in context reveal that new mandates on school principals also contribute to the manner in which district and building leadership interrelate, thus supporting the notion that context of the situation plays a major role in the district leaders’ function and by default how principals arrive at their perspective leadership decisions and styles.

### **Leadership in Educational Organizations**

School leadership is key to school improvement. School principals have to serve as front-line managers, small business executives, the battlefield commanders charged with leading their teams to new levels of effectiveness. In the new era of high-stakes testing and accountability, where school leaders are expected to demonstrate bottom-line results and use of data to drive decisions, the skills and knowledge of principals matter more and more as policy-makers demand results. The rise of school choice and more flexible teacher compensation and hiring have granted school leaders the opportunity to exercise discretion and operate with previously unprecedented latitude. District leaders are clear that they are now required to hold new and more demanding expectations for principals (Hess & Kelly, 2005).

The research over the last 35 years provides strong guidance on specific leadership behaviors for school administrators in that these behaviors have well-documented effects on student achievement, and that the educational role of the principal is more appropriately configured as a catalyst of such processes as collaborative inquiry, problem-solving, and school development (Marzano et al., 2005; Sergiovanni & Starrett, 1998). This research concludes that

what matters most as an instructional leader is the capacity to lead teachers and promote professional dialogue and the ability to build within the organization purposeful dedication to improving student outcomes (Marzano et al., 2005; Sergiovanni & Starrett, 1998). In other words, “instructional leadership is basically teaching people how to teach” (Mitchell & Castle, 2005, p. 414).

Instructional leadership theories in the 1970s and 1980s took center stage through effective school research, which argued that schools, regardless of socioeconomic status, can obtain high academic performance (Edmonds, 1979). According to Ylimaki (2007), research supports the idea that, across effective schools, principals that are characterized as instructional leaders with strong backgrounds in curriculum and instruction are able to improve classroom practice. For instance, Edmonds (1979) found that effective principals use their scholarly knowledge to develop written curricula from the ground up, providing specialized development and supervising the implementation of new learning in the classroom. Effective school research also found that effective principals create positive school learning cultures with high expectations for all students (Edmonds, 1979). Similarly, Hallinger (2003) highlighted a comprehensive set of instructional leadership behaviors that affected classroom practice, such as framing school goals, maintaining high visibility, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress.

Instructional leadership models of the 1980s were criticized, however, for being too directive and principal-centered, and for largely ignoring the voices of teachers, parents, and school leaders. However, instructional leadership approaches were prominent in the United States administrator training programs until the mid-1990s, when school restructuring and decentralization trends shifted attention towards a new model of transformational leadership

(Leithwood, 2000). In the mid-1990, principals who functioned as transformational leaders modeled desired behaviors and then empowered others to achieve extraordinary results (Hallinger, 2003).

Whether a school operates effectively or not also increases or decreases a student's chance of academic success. Researcher Karl Weick (1976) developed the concepts of tight and loose coupling to describe organizational structure in educational institutions. Weick contended that, in tightly coupled organizations, supervisors know exactly what all their employees are doing, and management can coordinate the activities of different departments according to a central strategy. However, he also contended that, in loosely coupled organizations, employees have more autonomy, and that different departments may operate without much coordination (Weick, 1976). As previously discussed in Chapter One, instructional leaders are increasingly pressed to improve student learning as documented by student achievement on standardized tests or higher graduation rates. Teachers are increasingly evaluated in terms of improving student learning (as measured by test scores); administrators are increasingly measured by the degree to which their schools improve learning for all students. Thus, reform efforts have challenged instructional leaders to reshape the traditions that have emerged around loose coupling. According to Weick (1976), school systems are especially likely to be loosely coupled because authority is not particularly strong, and the technical core is not very clear. Thus, attending to instruction requires leaders to tighten the coupling between administrative and instructional practices (Spillane & Burch, 2006).

Many organizations are tightly coupled on paper but loosely coupled in practice. Employees in any organization tend to push back or try to circumvent attempts to supervise them too closely. The fact that teachers do not always do exactly what principals tell them is well-



established in organization theory literature as the *principal-agent problem* (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). For example, teachers might follow procedures perfectly when their administrator is watching but disregard the rules entirely when the administrator is out. Specifically, teachers easily ignore principals and superintendents by closing their doors (Brazer & Keller, 2015). Some teachers have specialized skills that administrators may not understand well enough to supervise in detail, such as the gifted teacher or special needs teacher. Additionally, the possibility of acting independently of central authority is further enhanced by the difficulty of a principal to fully understand effective teaching for every grade level or subject area (Brazer & Keller, 2015). Administrators sometimes find it more convenient to allow a looser structure in practice to keep the organization running. A potential disadvantage of loose coupling is inconsistency. However, a potential advantage is flexibility. Another potential advantage is that problems in one department can sometimes be quarantined from other departments because they all function independently. A potential disadvantage is that implementing any strategic change across the whole organization can be difficult.

Some may regard loose coupling as negative; however, certain purposes can be served by having a system in which the components are loosely coupled. The basic contention is that loose coupling permits some parts of an organization to continue (Anderson, 2010). Loose coupling lessens the probability that the organization will have to or be able to respond to each little change in the environment that occurs (Anderson, 2010). A loosely coupled system may be a good system for localized adaptation. If all of the elements in a large system are loosely coupled to one another, then any loosely coupled system's one element can adjust to and modify a local unique contingency (Anderson, 2010). In loosely coupled systems where the character, distinctiveness, and divisions of elements are maintained, the system can possibly keep a greater

number of metamorphoses and innovative solutions than would be the case with a tightly coupled system. A loosely coupled system could preserve more cultural protection to be drawn upon in times of drastic transformation than in the case for more tightly coupled systems. Loosely coupled systems may be solutions to the challenge that adaptation can prevent adaptability. When a specific system fits into an ecological position and does so with great success, this change can be expensive. It can be expensive because resources that are of no use in a current environment might worsen or vanish even though they could be vital in an altered environment. It is possible that loosely coupled systems maintain more diversity in responding than do tightly coupled systems, and therefore, they can adjust to a significantly broader radius of changes in the environment than would be true for tightly coupled systems (Anderson, 2010). Essentially, effective leaders must not only have the capacity to lead followers, but must also be able to discern the organizational structure and operate within it effectively.

Current educational realities require that research now focus on identifying leadership behaviors within educational institutions that seek to advance student achievement. Many in the field propose that leaders can learn the skill sets and disciplines that will assist them in staying focused on improving teaching and learning. It is equally important that school leaders be aware of and properly manage certain obstacles that prevent the educational environment from reaching its academic goals. Current research consistently acknowledges school leadership as a crucial factor in enhancing teaching and learning, yet the research has been relatively random in how school leaders are prepared and supported as they navigate the challenges of improving student outcomes. D'Auria (2015) found that, by overcoming certain pitfalls and establishing specific leadership skills and knowledge that can be learned and practiced, administrators can be transformed into proficient and, in some cases, exemplary school leaders. According to D'Auria

(2015), those obstacles include the following four pitfalls:

1) *Undervaluing the importance of culture*: D'Auria (2015) asserts that, while effective teachers developed a positive and inspiring classroom climate, leaders were less comfortable acknowledging and embracing the concept of the importance of overall school climate influencing adult learning. By shaping the climate of the organization, the study concluded that school leaders can have a significant positive impact on the overall organization, similar to successful classroom teachers.

2) *Letting the problem of the moment move the organization off course and away from strategies that will lead to improvement in student learning*: The research revealed that leaders lack the skill of “staying the course” in the face of draining day-to-day problems. Staying strategic in the face of urgent but less important issues requires what was described as a “21st-century” skillset. “21st-century skills” are core skills, such as collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving that are needed to thrive in today’s world (Rich, 2010). The daily management of students, teachers, and parents alike can be extremely distracting and consume an enormous amounts of energy. Their research found that this skill can be one of most challenging aspects of today’s leadership.

3) *Balancing our focus on what we are doing with the effect of what we are doing*: School leaders must establish an equilibrium in planning and implementing initiatives, with a focus on measuring the effect of those activities. The research found that, for a leader to be effective, they must continually assess their impact along the way to be able to make the necessary modifications and adjustments to achieve the desired results. Without this balance, blame often substitutes for responsibility, and that keeps the organization from continuous improvement.

4) *Underestimating the importance of skillful practice*: Leaders need to know what to do and how to apply their knowledge to the circumstance at hand (Hill & Lineback, 2011). Leaders must evolve beyond management and operations; skillful leaders must now possess the skillset to observe and analyze instruction; collect, examine, and mine data; and conduct effective meetings, collaborate, and manage conflicts. The study proposed that leaders must model and practice at all times to hone their skills to continually improve their effectiveness (D'Auria, 2015).

### **Standards-Based Leadership Preparation**

The implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 focused on confronting the weakness of contemporary school leadership and has made it impossible to ignore the escalating need for high-quality principals—individuals who have been prepared to provide the instructional leadership necessary to improve student achievement (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Attention is being focused on one of the variables critical to effective education: leadership (Hale & Moorman, 2003). The systems that produce our nation's principals are complex and interrelated, and governed by the state (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Each state establishes licensing, certification, and recertification requirements for school leaders and, in most places, approves the college and university programs that prepare school leaders (Hale & Moorman, 2003). It appears that neither organized professional development programs nor formal preparation programs based in higher education institutions have adequately prepared principals to meet the priority demands of the 21st century, namely, improved student achievement (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

One step toward changing the profession was the development by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in 1996 of a set of standards for school leaders by the Interstate

School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), a representative body of most of the major stakeholders in educational leadership including national associations, states, and colleges and universities (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Since 1996, 46 states have adopted the ISLLC standards and used them to guide policy and practice related to principal preparation (Canole & Young, 2013). Further, the ISLLC standards have been revised twice, most recently in 2015, to reflect national changes in educational leadership (Canole & Young, 2013). State and local policy-makers are now establishing leadership development around the conception of teaching, learning, and leading that is reinforced in a number of ways to become a central mission for schools, rather an isolated activity on the margins (Darling-Hammond, LaPoint, Meyerson & Orr, 2007).

The ISLLC standards have drawn criticism. Some suggest that the standards are not anchored in a rigorous research or knowledge base, that they unduly reinforce the status quo, and that they lack sufficient specificity or operational guidance to help school leaders figure out what to do (Hale & Moorman, 2003). However, despite the criticism, the ISLLC standards are an important development in the field of educational leadership (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Rather, they were intended as indicators of knowledge, dispositions, and performances important to effective school leadership (Hale & Moorman, 2003). The standards confirmed the centrality of the principal's role in ensuring student achievement through an unwavering emphasis on "leadership for student learning" (Hale & Moorman, 2003, p. 3). To date, the ISLLC standards have served in many states and institutions as the framework for revising principal preparation programs and in-service professional development activities (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

Some researchers contend that "those who seek entrance to leadership programs gravitate toward programs based on convenience and ease of completion; quality of program is hardly a

leading criterion” (Hale & Moorman, 2003, p. 5). However, because leadership plays a role in whether a school is effective or ineffective, and a school’s impact on student achievement is due to the leadership displayed, school programs should be measured by the ISLLC Educational Leadership Policy Standards. These standards can serve as indicators by which the effectiveness of leadership preparation program can be measured. These standards suggest that effective educational leaders promote the success of every child by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources. The functions assert that an effective school leader collects and analyzes data pertinent to the educational environment. Effective school leaders promote understanding, appreciation, and use of a community’s diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources. An effective school leader builds and sustains a positive relationship with families and caregivers. An effective school leader builds and sustains a productive relationship with community partners. They also suggest that effective educational leaders promote the success of every student by acting with integrity and fairness, and in an ethical manner. The specific functions associated with them include: a) an effective school ensures a system of accountability for every student’s academic and social success; b) a school leader models principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior; c) an effective school leader safeguards the values of democracy, equity, and diversity; d) an effective school leader considers and evaluates the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making; and e) effective school leaders promote social justice and ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling.

The challenge of identifying standards of leadership and the functions that will lead to proficiency within each skillset continues to be daunting. Although the ISLLC standards sought

to provide a framework for the states that could be commonly accepted, each state provided its own interpretation of what each standard represents. Similar in nature, the actual descriptors represent variations in its language. According to Clayton (2014), the challenge continues to be to determine which skills, knowledge, and dispositions are required for effective school leadership capacity. As previously noted, the ISLLC standards were established to clarify those skills and behaviors associated with being effective in school leadership. Clayton asserted that the purpose was to inform preparation, licensure, induction, and professional development for school leaders. In addition, several other leadership standards have emerged to provide clarity for administrative preparation programs, such as the Council for the Accreditation of Educators Program (CAEP), which adopted standards specific to leadership as well as standards for instructional supervision and use of technology. Clayton (2014) also provided evidence that the underlying premise of ISLLC standards can be found in the language each state adopted, which included an emphasis on visioning, instructional focus, organizational management, community collaboration, integrity and ethical behavior, and an understanding of the political and social context of what is required in today's educational landscape. The study conducted by Clayton (2014) created a "comparison and crosswalk" for standards and administrators using the states of New Jersey, Virginia, and Florida. The comparison revealed that, although the terminology was similar, the level of specificity was varied, with New Jersey being the most general and both Florida and Virginia providing a higher level of detail that reflected more of the functional requirements for each standard to be mastered. Below is a sample from the crosswalk that represents the variations in language from each state, comparing the theme of *Instructional Focus*.

Table 1:

*Variations in Language Comparing Instructional Focus (Clayton, 2014)*

Theme	New Jersey	Virginia	Florida
<b>Instructional Focus</b>	School administrators shall be educational leaders who promote the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.	<p>The school leader effectively employs various processes for gathering, analyzing, and using data for decision-making.</p> <p>The school leader plans, implements, supports, and assesses instructional programs that enhance teaching and improve student achievement in student learning.</p> <p>The school leader supervises the alignment, coordination, and delivery of instructional programs to promote student learning and oversees an accountability system to monitor student success.</p> <p>The school selects, inducts, supervises, supports, evaluates, and retains quality instructional</p>	<p>High-performing leaders promote a positive learning culture, provide an effective instructional program, and apply best practices to student learning, especially in the area of reading and other foundational skills.</p> <p>High-performing leaders monitor the success of all students in the learning environment; align curricula, instruction, and assessment processes to promote effective student performance; and use a variety of benchmarks, learning expectations, and feedback measures to ensure accountability for engaging in the educational process.</p> <p>High-performing leaders plan effectively, use critical thinking and</p>



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and support  
personnel.

The school  
provides professional  
development  
programs designed to  
improve instruction  
and student  
performance that are  
consistent with  
division initiatives  
and the School  
Improvement Plan.

The school leader  
demonstrates  
effective  
organization skills to  
achieve school,  
community, and  
division goals.

problem-solving  
techniques, and  
collect and analyze  
data for continuous  
improvement.

High-performing  
leaders recruit, select,  
nurture, and where  
appropriate, provide  
trained personnel  
development tours  
and partnership  
programs and design  
and implement  
comprehensive  
progress professional  
growth plans for all  
staff.

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Using the ISLLC standards as a guide, many states and local districts have enacted leadership criteria tailored to their own needs. New York City established a district-wide initiative to encourage building principals and teachers to use data more effectively. The district's "school leadership competencies" provide highly detailed requirements for assessing how effective principals are at applying and promoting effective use of data to drive instruction. An "exemplary leader must demonstrate, among other things, that he or she "creates a school culture in which staff reflects on data to determine their professional needs and create learning opportunities to address their own needs" and "create[s] excitement around the tracking progress and develops a school culture that uses data to drive continuous improvement." The main point

of leadership standards is that they only have the desired effect when districts actually use them to shape how they select, hire, train, and evaluate school leaders (Mendels & Mitgang, 2013).

Further research on effective school leadership skillsets and functions will provide the profession with additional insight into best practices on how school leaders can be prepared to effect the change within their school communities required to achieve success in today's world of high-stakes accountability. By applying a standards-based approach to the preparation and support of school leaders, we can create a shared language that identifies those leadership behaviors deemed to be most effective.

### **Research on Leadership Preparation Programs**

Consistent throughout most administrative preparation programs is a curriculum consisting of heavy emphasis on school law, school finance, human resource management, leadership principles, and curricula management is representative of the norm generally accepted. The consensus in the field of school leadership is that school law and finance are important and necessary to protect the school community as a whole. To the contrary, Streshly and Gray (2010) argued that the above-mentioned knowledge base is important but to a lesser extent when compared to what Collins (2001) described as being the main target of what administrators should really know. Their research determined that the focus of educational leadership preparation programs should be developing leadership behaviors and characteristics typical of exemplary leaders in any field and that impacts school success the most. They contended that leadership training programs should concentrate on the behaviors of excellent school leaders and how their behaviors positively impact schools. In addition, they assert that research-based determinants should drive the shaping of leadership preparation programs as opposed to traditional consensus-based standards. Most in the field will acknowledge that not all

potential school leaders can be educated to be great leaders; therefore, it is imperative that pre-service programs be designed to ensure that the school leader has the best possible opportunity to achieve success upon program completion.

School leaders are critical in establishing the educational focus for schools deemed to be successful, but the current research on the best ways to prepare and develop top-notch school leaders is minimal. According to researchers, principal preparation programs fail to prepare graduates for the role of instructional leader, especially in reference to students with disabilities (Lynch, 2012). The job description of today's school leader may include a litany of roles, including visionary instruction and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special program experts, as well as overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates. School leaders are also required to mediate conflicts that arise between parents, teachers, students, district offices, unions, state and local mandates, as well as the ever-increasing needs of the student populations (Davis, Darling-Hammond, Lapointe, & Meyerson, 2005).

In determining whether pre-service programs adequately prepare school leaders as instructional leaders, it is important to discuss the impact of the various delivery systems and determine if what they are delivering is what prospective leaders need in order to be successful instructional leaders. Critics in the field continue to raise concerns about the quality of programs in which school leaders are prepared. The method by which principals are prepared has continued to receive intense scrutiny; some research has gone as far as to describe "the majority of programs as ranging from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country's leading universities" (Levine, 2005, p. 23).

A study conducted by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Program, CAEP,

(2002) argued that, in spite of the leadership shortages, educational administrator programs are graduating an increasing amount of certified school leaders. Their report concludes that the process by which many principal preparation programs traditionally screen, selecting graduate candidates is often ill-defined, irregularly applied, and lacking in rigor. Their study found that, as a result, administrators are too easily accepted into and pass the system on the basis of their performance on academic coursework rather than a comprehensive assessment of the knowledge, skills, and disposition needed to successfully lead schools. The study goes on to state that administrators who are now fully certified and seeking their first positions in school leadership may not be equipped for the new paradigm shift from the role as manager to effective instructional leadership. This has required an increasing number of districts to create intensive support systems for principals to build the skills they need to effectively lead schools (NCATE, 2002, as cited by Davis, Darling-Hammond, Lapointe, & Meyerson, 2005).

The Wallace Foundation (2007) commissioned another study of pre-service training programs, indicating that they need to be more selective in identifying promising leadership candidates instead of open enrollment. The case study was a collaboration of selected pre-service programs representing California, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, and New York with in-service programs from selected school districts within their respective states. The distinguishing factor in the respective programs was the willingness of all parties in both, district and universities, to facilitate cross-sector collaboration." For example, one district provided subsidies for credits and streamlined hiring, and in some cases collaborated with the development of university curricula. Likewise, universities provided tuition waivers, mentors, and coaches for the new principals and faculty for district-based professional development. The evidence suggests that the partnerships and collaborations were effective in helping to prepare principals

for specific district mandates and regional contexts, which seek to expand resources available to programs for high-quality coursework and field placements. This unique collaboration between universities and districts also increased the likelihood that leaders will continue to receive relevant and consistent support and professional development throughout their leadership careers.

This research also suggested that more emphasis should be placed on the instructional leadership component of pre-service training. In addition, they determined that pre-service programs must seek to enhance the integration of theory and practice and provide a better preparation of school leaders that will allow for candidates to work effectively within the school community. The findings from the case study stated that professional development resources must be based on evidence of effectiveness, and that internships must be hands-on leadership opportunities. Further analysis of the 2007 Wallace Foundation Report also goes on to assert that school districts must recognize that professional development of school leaders is not just a “brief moment in time” that ceases with graduation from a licensing program. Instead, training of school leaders must be a lifelong career endeavor that is aligned to the needs of the school leader in its mentoring and extends throughout the entire career (Darling-Hammond, LaPoint, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007).

The pre-service programs in the sample found in the Wallace Report were represented by the following elements:

- A comprehensive and coherent curriculum aligned with state and professional standards, in particular the ISLLC standards, which emphasize instructional leadership;
- A philosophy and curriculum emphasizing instructional leadership and school

improvement;

- Active, student-centered instruction that integrates theory and practice and stimulates reflection. , and Instructional strategies include problem-based learning, action research-field-based projects, journal writing, portfolios that feature substantial use of feedback and assessment by peers, faculty, and the candidates themselves;
- Faculty who are knowledgeable in theory subject areas, including both university professors and practitioners experienced in school administration;
- Social and professional support in the form of a cohort structure and formalized mentoring and advising by expert principals;
- Vigorous, targeted recruitment and selection to seek out experts teachers with leadership potential; and
- Well-designed and -supervised administrative internships that allow candidates to engage in leadership responsibilities for substantial periods of time under the tutelage of expert veterans (Darling-Hammond, LaPoint, Meyerson & Orr 2007).

The study highlighted a “spillover effect” that was beyond the scope of the program itself in that the cohort groups formed a peer network that members relied on for social and professional support throughout their careers. The candidates also cited the benefits of the strong connections established with mentors and advisors that also continued to provide support to principals after they had completed their programs.

Research continues to identify the support and development of teachers, as well as the effective implementation of organizational processes, as key in affecting student outcomes. This consensus is becoming more evidenced in the preparation and licensing requirements across the

field, thus the need for a framework such as the ISLLC standards. As the topic of educational leadership continues to be examined, the need to develop effective school leaders continues to be a crucial factor in meeting the requirements of today's educational community. It is imperative that pre-service programs are proven to be effective in preparing future school leaders for the challenges they will inherently face. These effective pre-service programs possess some essential attributes that are most effective in creating effective leaders, including being researched-based, having curricular coherence, providing experience in authentic contexts, using cohort grouping and mentors, and having a structure that enables a collaborative approach between programs and area schools (Davis, Darling-Hammond, Lapointe, & Meyerson, 2005).

Traditionally, college- and university-based educational leadership preparation programs have emphasized management and administrative issues rather than curricular and instructional issues (Hale & Moorman, 2003). In doing so, they have failed to place emphasis on essential skills that have been identified as necessary for instructional leaders who are leading today's educational institutions. Educational researcher Joseph Murphy observed that some principal preparation programs teach weak content in an ineffective manner (Bottoms & Egelson, 2012). University-based programs that get the highest marks for preparing principals who can meet the demands of the job in the 21st century are often viewed as deviations from the norm. Typically, such programs are cohort-based and serve between 20 and 25 students who enter the program at the same time and are bonded into a community of leaders (Hale & Moorman, 2003). More common principal preparation programs include programs in universities inside of colleges of education, programs in universities outside of colleges of education, alternative preparation programs in partnerships between school districts and/or other organizations, and nontraditional providers such as online providers that operate outside of the walls of traditional brick-and-

mortar traditional institutions.

The principal preparation programs in universities inside of colleges of education are specialization programs within the school of education that provide students with an education in educational leadership and award a master's of education (M.Ed.), educational specialist (Ed.S.), Ed.D, or doctoral degree. The principal preparation programs in universities inside of colleges of education are considered traditional programs where students can earn their degrees through full-time or part-time on-campus attendance. The traditional program requires students to be physically present to listen and take notes during professors' lectures. For many traditional college classes, attendance is mandatory.

The principal preparation programs in universities outside colleges of education do not have a specialization program within the school of education; however, they also can provide students with an education in educational leadership and award a master's of education (M.Ed.), educational specialist (Ed.S.), Ed.D, or doctoral degree. The principal preparation programs in universities outside of colleges of education are also considered traditional programs where students can earn their degrees through full-time or part-time on-campus attendance. As a traditional program, it also requires students to be physically present to listen and take notes during professors' lectures. Again, for many traditional college classes, attendance is mandatory.

The alternative principal preparation programs in partnership between school districts and/or other organizations provide students with an education and training in educational leadership catered towards the needs and desires of the school district, and award a degree and certification after completion. These state- or district-specific programs allow candidates who have successfully completed these preparation programs to apply for and accept administrative positions in that state and/or district. The need for principal preparation programs to improve



how school leaders are equipped to lead and the overall lack of progress to date continues to be attributed to the traditional programs' failure to seek out interdisciplinary connections within the university or to fully utilize all external resources at their disposal. Furthermore, district-based professional development often falls short in utilizing the intellectual resources available in their local universities.

The need for stronger clinical training has encouraged a growing number of universities to collaborate with districts and school as equal partners in the design, implementation, and assessment of pre-service principal preparation programs. Proponents maintain that close collaboration enhances program consistency and helps to develop a sense of shared purpose and a "common vocabulary" between districts and local colleges of education.

In such collaborative programs, practicing administrators are commonly used to mentor administrative interns, assist university faculty in the assessment of candidates in the field, participate in university screening and admissions processes, serve as members of the university's program advisory committee, and sometimes teach courses (Norton, O'Neill, Fry, & Hill, 2002).

The non-traditional principal preparation program providers, such as online institutions that operate outside of the walls of traditional brick-and-mortar institutions, are programs that allow students to earn their degrees primarily or entirely through the use of an Internet-connected computer. These can include accredited online programs award associates, bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees. Although there are varying opinions regarding the quality of online degrees, online institutions are very prevalent. About two-thirds of the largest traditional institutions have fully online programs (Allen & Seaman, 2006). A distinction between online and traditional colleges is the Internet-based curriculum. However, for some institutions, the

online degree may be indistinguishable from a degree earned in a campus-based program.

Among all of these programs, the trend that is beginning to gain attention in today's research, although limited in actual participation, is the alternative process for preparing school leaders. According to Peel, Wallace, Buckner, Wren, and Evans (2001), universities have traditionally focused on introducing potential administrators to the latest trends and theories in educational leadership while providing few practical skills or little opportunity to apply their knowledge bases to real-world school experiences. The opportunity to gain licensure by alternative programs varies from state to state. For example, California created a state-based alternative certification program that allows for (1) administrators to attend preparation programs at regionally accredited institutions that provide for verification of issuance and (2) achieve a passing score of 173 on the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (Barbour, 2005). Most often, veteran teachers, as opposed to non-educators seeking access to the field, used this process. The concern with this process, along with others that allow candidates to become school administrators without university-based or "traditional" training, is the extent to which students are actually being prepared to be successful as leaders, with a particular focus on urban settings.

The Wallace Foundation, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Grand Rapids Public Schools, developed an aspiring leaders program (David & Darling-Hammond, 2012). This was a grant-funded, customized cohort model with the sole purpose of (1) developing a leadership academy to increase the pool of aspiring leaders especially in urban school districts, (2) assisting professional organizations to develop and implement an MDE endorsement and enhancement program for practicing administrators, (3) developing a certified teacher leadership program, and (4) creating a toolkit for MDE that provides an assessment instrument for administrator performance (Davis & Darling-Hammond,

2012). The two alternative preparation programs are examples of states attempting to find more effective ways to prepare school leaders through a non-traditional university-based process.

### **Instructional Leadership Preparation/Intern Experiences**

Traditionally, the focus of principal training programs has been on school management and maintaining a safe disciplinary environment. In the past, internships have been centered on tasks such as scheduling; budgeting; student discipline; faculty meetings; home–school communication; laws, policies, and procedures; developing reports; student planning concerns; testing; facilitating school community relations by arranging substitutes; and monitoring extracurricular activities. All of these are vital tasks, but they do not support instruction directly. In this age of accountability, these tasks are no longer enough. An importance must be placed on the above-mentioned tasks that facilitate instructional leadership, school improvement, and the student achievement that has been historically overlooked, if not nonexistent, aspects of internship (Catano & Stronge, 2006).

The mandates to redesign educational leadership programs in universities continue to be prominent in today's discussions on preparing school leaders. This is apparent particularly as it pertains to the traditional manner in which candidates gain field experience, often referred to as internships. No longer are candidates enrolled in one or two courses (i.e., practia) during which they participate in field experiences supervised by university supervisors and local school mentors. Instead, candidates now learn field experiences as a part of course activities. Field experiences are embedded in each course and are designed to expose students directly to on-the-job experiences together with course content. This change places a greater emphasis on collaborating with the school district and university faculty, while providing meaningful experiences for the candidates in leadership preparation programs (Chandler, Chan, & Jiang,

2013).

Most programs divide leadership coursework and internships into two separate components. However, research has indicated that first-year students who have internship experiences are significantly more confident and perform statistically better at the critical tasks related to the principal's role than those without intern experience. In addition, educational leadership candidates were favorable toward school-based practicum activities that enabled them to apply new knowledge into practice and receive mentoring from practicing administrators as the most valued program experiences (Jiang, Patterson, Chandler, & Chan, 2009). In an alternative perspective, Daresh (2002) cautioned that the absence of a relevant connection between theory and practice could prevent principal candidates from learning content. Orr and Orphanos (2010) state that key factors in determining practicum success included the quality of mentorship and the time candidates devoted to practicum activities. Bradshaw, Perreault, McDowelle, and Bell (1997) concluded in their study that candidates of full-time extended internships were better prepared for entry-level administrative positions than their part-time counterparts.

Recent research has suggested that the internship should be completed in phases. Specifically, Joachim and Klotz (2000) identified areas of educational leadership that need to be covered in the field experience, including skills in school-based management, the ability to address diverse student populations, sensitivity to child development, the effectiveness of instructional leaders, a capability to create a community of learners, and the establishment of reflective practices (Joachim & Klotz, 2000).

If principals are now required to function as instructional leaders, principal preparation programs must now focus their curricula on preparing school leaders in the methods of

instructional leadership. Many studies have found that coursework now must provide for authentic experiences and internships (Levine, 2005). For instance, Cunningham and Sherman (2008) quote Harvard University Professor Richard Elmore in his 2006 University Council for Educational for Educational Administration address, in which he called for “massive improvement in the way we prepare our future leaders, with major emphasis on authentic experiences and internships” (p. 308).

Many scholars have argued that field experiences should be viewed as the key vehicle for learning with classroom work intended to support the learning that “occurs in the field rather than vice versa.” Therefore, all classroom experiences should be embedded in or situated within the context of practice. Field experiences and problems of practice should be seamlessly integrated into educational leadership curricula, with the clear purpose of content knowledge aimed at improving practice (Brown-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Daresh, 2004; Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennet, 2004; Cunningham, 2007). Though the administrators’ impact on student achievement should be the foundation of principal preparation, it has not always been the focus of educational leadership.

Some experts in the field assert that the focus should not be on how to train principals. Instead, a contrarian view is offered: The training of school leaders must be grounded upon theoretical perspectives of experiential learning. Research on most effective principal preparation programs clearly shows that in-depth field experience and, if possible, a full-time apprenticeship with mentoring accelerate and deepen the preparation of future administrators (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Preparation programs that are able to blend coursework with intensive field experiences provide rich opportunities to bring real problems of leadership into focus with theory and research. Experiencing leadership in the context of a school or district setting further

advances the importance of the human aspects of leadership that include learning to work as a team player and building productive alliances and partnerships (Fenwick, 2003; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lawrence & Nohria, 2002).

A major theme in current criticisms of educational leadership is that programs lack applicable and relevant leadership preparation with content that lacks focus on instructional leadership. This results in not meeting today's mandate of increasing student achievement as principals obtain positions in the field (Hallinger, 1992). Research has identified certain areas of emphasis that would define "instructional leadership," and thus increase the likelihood of positively impacting student outcomes. For instance, some in the field suggest that the maximum driver of student achievement is caused by the following: asking tough questions such as what academic success consists of, setting high but achievable goals, maintaining orderly learning environments, encouraging teachers' beliefs in their students' ability to learn, modeling respect for hard work and academic achievement, setting a standard for friendliness and commitment to stakeholders, making school supplies and instructional materials readily available, holding formal and informal professional development, facilitating conversations with teachers around issues facing the school, sharing of best practices, creating incentives for student learning, and acknowledging teacher professionalism (Hoy, Tarter, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).

Clearly incorporating all aspects of instructional leadership is needed to effectively prepare school leaders with the depth required to master each component, but doing so will be challenging and require pre-service preparation programs to rethink their internship formats. Hallinger (1992) contended that the term *instructional leadership* has consistently suffered from conceptual and practical limitations, first because the term has different meanings for different

educations, and second because transforming the practice of instructional leaders takes a longer time than scholars and administrators have patience for accomplishing. From a practical standpoint, other factors over the past two decades have served to move instructional leadership down on the priority list for many school principals. Prominent among these factors are shifts in educational policies and structures. In many jurisdictions, for example, system restructurings have positioned principals as officers of the organization rather than as lead teachers (Jones, 1999).

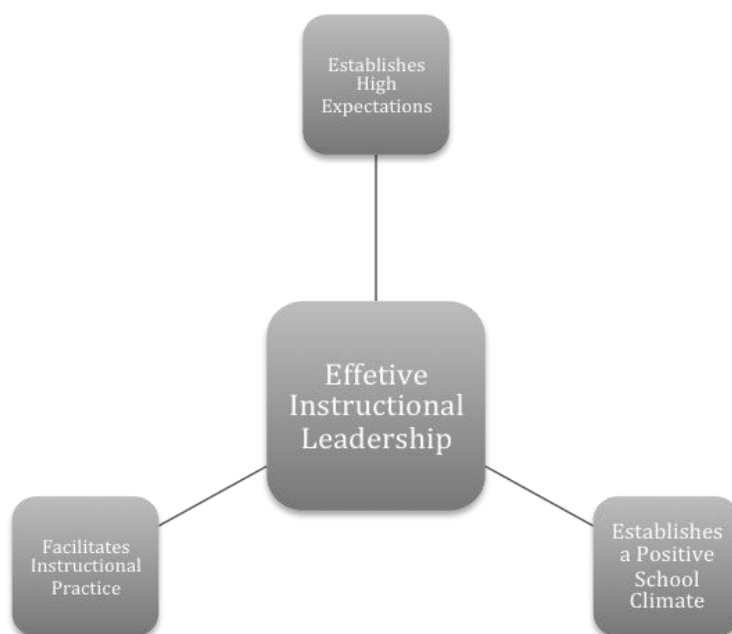
Marsh (2000) states that the current focus on accountability and management necessary to meet accountability requirements suggests that personal attention to instructional leadership may not be appropriate for the role of school principals to assume. He argues that principals could track results and build support, but should leave the instructional leadership functions to teachers. Many in the field disagree with his contention because research suggests that the drive for accountability should not result in the demise of instructional leadership for principals. Newman, King, and Rigdon (1997) stated that a singular focus on externally mandated accountability measures reduces the capacity of school principals and teachers to implement educational changes that were responsive to the school realities. They argue that, in successful schools, principals maintain connections with the daily operations of classrooms' internal accountability practices to provide the oversight of policy mandates. Due to the various grade levels and content area requirements, few in the field of education take the position that principals need to be experts in all educational matters. However, others define instructional leadership as being solely focused on improving instruction for students (Mitchell & Castle, 2005).

Castle, Mitchell, and Gupta (2002) noted that principals who have been out of the

classroom for an extended period of time feel uncomfortable serving as instructional leaders because they equate instructional leadership with curriculum expertise. There are various positions on what role the instructional leader should play in a school; however, some experts argue that the educational role of the principal is more properly configured as the facilitator of such processes and the leader of collective inquiry problem-solving in school development.

Gulcan (2012) identified the following as instructional leadership roles for school principals: 1) Identifying the vision and mission of the school: a school principal defines a school's missions; determines and shares the goals of the school; and assesses, develops, and implements them; 2) programming and administering education; 3) staff development; 4) monitoring and assessing the teaching process; and 5) creating and developing a positive school climate. This description of instructional leadership (Gulcan, 2012) is consistent with recent literature that supports the notion that instructional improvements require direct involvement of principals who are central to school improvement initiatives that, in turn, are critical to the overall quality of the teaching and learning of school community. Gulcan's (2012) research contends that successful schools have their principals as the hub of school activity, and their offices are the center of information, coordination, decision-making, and problem-solving for the school community (Mitchell & Castle, 2005). Within this framework, effective instructional leadership evolves over time by the establishment of a school culture that engages in professional inquiry among leadership and instructional staff (Grimmett, 1996). The promotion of capable school preparation programs that provide for practical experiences in the area of instructional leadership is worthy of further study. For the current study, the ISLLC standards related to instructional leadership were used as a framework for the research data collection and data analysis.





*Figure 1.* Effective instructional leadership (CCSSO, 2008).

### **Summary**

The literature review for this study provided background information about leadership. The literature review also included information on the history of the theory of leadership. In addition, it reviews the literature on principal preparation programs as well as the competencies required for effective instructional leadership. The central premise is that school leadership should be transformational and focused on instructional leadership instead of traditional approaches to the principalship that may not prepare leaders to support schools and students effectively.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

### *Introduction*

The purpose of this qualitative study was to evaluate the perceptions that K-12 school administrators in New Jersey have about their pre-service principal training and its impact on their current in-service practice as instructional leaders. Specifically, the purpose of this study

was to investigate principals' perceptions of pre-service programs and the impact school licensure programs have on their success or lack thereof in implementing key ISLLC standards related to instructional leadership. The purpose of this chapter is to (1) describe the research methodology of the study, (2) explain the sample selection, (3) describe the procedure used in designing the instrument and collecting the data, and (4) provide an explanation of the data analysis procedures that were used to identify themes and patterns in participants' responses.

### **Setting**

This study was conducted with principals of public schools serving students in grades 3 to 8 in New Jersey, which has 2,522 schools operating in 586 districts. The state school system comprises 86 charter schools, 1,948 elementary schools, and 482 secondary schools. Total school enrollment is 1.3 million, and the operating budget is \$7.9 billion. New Jersey districts are subdivided by a cluster of factors identified as District Factor Groups (DFGs), which classify districts based on five key factors related to socioeconomic status: 1) percentage of adults with no high school diploma, 2) adults with some college education, 3) occupational status, 4) unemployment rate, 5) individuals in poverty, and 6) median family income. The current study sought to include principals from schools with differing DFG classifications. All interviews were conducted in-person or by phone and recorded on a digital recorder.

### **Population and Sample**

The sample for this study consisted of New Jersey school principals who completed their pre-service licensure under the guide of ISSCL Standards and were leading schools in testing grades three to eight. The sample included participants who had a variety of demographic differences, including males and females; years of experience as principals; successful and unsuccessful student academic outcomes; location of school in New Jersey; testing grades;

student language and ethnic demographics; and type of school, including elementary or middle school. To obtain the sample, a survey was administered to each referred New Jersey school principal. Based on their responses to the survey, sample participants were selected who met the following criteria: 1) New Jersey principals of testing grades three through eight, 2) completed their principal preparation programs in New Jersey, and 3) completed programs that used the ISLLC standards as a guiding framework for training.

The consent form was only sent to those who met the criteria and agreed to participate in the study. There were no initiatives or compensation offered.

### **Data Collection**

This qualitative study consisted of semi-structured interviews. This method of interviewing was selected to ascertain individual respondents' unique perspectives on the research questions. According to Merriam (2009), semi-structured interviews allow for a prescribed set of questions to be utilized while allowing for the researcher to respond to the situation and guide the interview as he or she sees fit. The uniqueness of the participants and their various experience allowed for the contribution of a rich body of knowledge that could greatly enhance the research findings.

Data were collected using semi-structured interview protocols during one-to-one interviews conducted by the principal investigator (PI). Interviews were approximately 60 minutes each and were recorded on a laptop computer and then transcribed after each interview. The PI recorded notes on paper and then analyzed the data by relating highlighted patterns to the key research questions and identifying insights that gave context or a rationale for the themes that emerged.

### **Human Subjects Protection**

The research protocol forms were submitted to Seton Hall University's Human Subjects Review Board, and approval was gained before piloting or administering the procedures. All data were stored in a secure electronic database, and participants' responses were coded to ensure confidentiality (see Appendices for approval forms).

### **Research Design**

This study began by reviewing the literature to identify overarching themes in the components of effective instructional leaders. The researcher then reviewed the national school leadership standards developed by the ISLLC in 2008. The researcher reviewed the six ISLLC standards and selected functions from the standards that had a potential direct impact on academic achievement for students. The remaining functions were not selected because they did appear to directly address the academic achievement of students, although all of the functions and standards contribute to the overall success of a school.

The ISLLC standards were selected as framework to use in the study, as they are nationally recognized leadership standards that have been adopted as a way for state licensure agencies to have a commonly accepted way to identify leadership capacities. The interview questions were built around a compressed version of the ISLLC standards that attempts to identify areas that address three specific areas related to instructional leadership. The ISLLC functions were then used to develop self-reflection and interview questions for this study.

The 2008 ISLLC standards comprise a standard and its functions. Functions are examples of how the standards might be observed in a school setting. The functions used in this study are listed in Table 1. The corresponding functions were then reviewed, and four themes were identified based on the functions: curriculum, pedagogy, environment, and expectations.

Curriculum and pedagogy overlapped significantly and were collapsed into one category, instructional practices. The remaining categories, environment and expectations, remained.

The functions associated with instructional leadership were then categorized into three themes: instructional practices (instruction), establishing expectations (expectations), and promoting a positive learning environment (environment). These themes were selected from the components of effective schools as described by Edmonds (1979). There was a precedent in previous research for sub-dividing functions into themes because doing so made the functions easier to use (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Three research questions were then developed based on the functions and their corresponding themes. Each of these themes is defined in Table 2.

*Table 2*  
*Definitions of Instructional Leadership Themes*

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Instructional practices: Instructional practices include communicating and enabling a school's vision for instructional practice, curriculum and pedagogy, instructional delivery, organizational time, and assessment and accountability systems (CCSSO, 2008).

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Establishing expectations: Instructional leaders establish expectations by promoting a school culture in which all school members demonstrate their beliefs that all students can achieve their highest potential, and that the staff are able to facilitate their achievement (Kirk & Jones, 2004; Levine & Lezotte, 1995).

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Promoting positive learning environments: Instructional leaders promote a positive learning environment by creating a learning environment that is free of chaos and disruptive behaviors. They promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff (Kirk & Jones, 2004).

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### **Instrumentation**

This study was conducted in three phases: 1) an initial questionnaire to review participants' demographics, 2) a brief reflective survey to identify their perceptions of pre-service training, and 3) a semi-structured interview designed to help answer the research questions. An initial questionnaire that collected demographic information about the participants

was created using survey software, and a link to the survey was emailed to the participants. A letter that explained the survey was also included, along with an approval letter from the Human Subjects Review Board. Questionnaires were coded to track completion.

After completion of the initial demographic survey, the researcher emailed a reflective survey that consisted of several questions designed to measure participants' perceptions of the degree to which ISLLC standards were emphasized in their preservice training, their own proficiency in using the standard, and their actual current use of the standards. Finally, semi-structured interviews of approximately 20 questions were conducted. All interviews were conducted using an audio recorder and a telephone. Interviews were conducted by the PI.

Questions asked in the interview were related to the research questions and broken into four parts: a) introduction, b) defining leadership, c) perceptions of pre-service training, and d) perceptions of in-service practice. The interviewer asked additional questions for clarity and to probe for additional insights and reflective responses from the reflective survey for a specific participant (e.g., principals who work in schools with high concentrations of speakers of English as a second language). A debriefing opportunity to answer any questions from the interviewee was conducted at the end of each interview.

Interviews were recorded and then transcribed after each interview. Data were analyzed by relating highlighted patterns to the key questions, and by identifying insights that gave context or a rationale for the patterns that emerged. The interviewer completed notes from the interview and analyzed them for common themes and unique threads related to the research questions.

An in-depth semi-structured interview is a qualitative research technique that incorporates individual interviews with a small number of respondents, with the aim of seeking

to understand a person's thoughts about various situations, ideas, or programs (Boyce & Neale, 2006). This method is used to provide a context to other information, like outcome data. An in-depth interview adds additional perspectives to outcome data, which allows researchers to conceptualize a more complete picture (Boyce & Neale, 2006). While conducting interviews, the researcher will seek to explore perspectives of in-service principals and further understand their responses on the survey administered before the interview. The selection of this method was designed to answer questions that surveys or other types of methodologies were not able to answer. An interview protocol was developed and used in all interviews, but the interviewer was free to ask additional probing questions to seek clarification, additional illustrations, and context.

In sum, there were a total of 33 questions in the interview protocol questions, 15 questions in the demographic survey questions, and 19 questions in the reflective questions. Questions asked in the interview were related to the research questions and broken into four parts: a) introduction, b) defining leadership, c) perceptions of pre-service training, and d) perceptions of in-service practice. Samples of the questions are included below:

### **Introduction**

1. How do you define yourself as a principal? What are your strengths and weaknesses?
2. Tell me about your principal preparation program. What did you like about it, and what do you wish you could change or add?
3. Have you heard of the ISLLC standards, and if so, what do you know about them? Were they mentioned in your principal training program?

### **Defining Leadership**

1. How can principal preparation programs strengthen training as instructional leaders?
2. This is the definition of instructional leadership that we will use moving forward in this

study (refer them to it). Do you think this describes a good instructional leader? Would you change it at all?

### **Perceptions of Pre-Service Training and In-Service Practices**

1. Based on our definition, how prepared did you feel in this area when you left your principal training program? Was it the program or supplemental training on your own that helped you, or both?
2. How have you grown in this area since you became a principal? Training, experiences, or both?

### **Content and Face Validity of Research Instruments**

Content and face validity for the ISLLC survey questions was established by using an Item Content Validity Index (I-CVI) and Scale Content Validity Index (S-CVI) procedure described by Polit and Beck (2004) in which six expert reviewers (teachers, administrators) rated the appropriateness of each item on the ISLLC survey based on the construct that it was intended to measure. Expert reviewers were asked to rate the appropriateness of the construct on a scale of 1 to 3. Scale content validity agreement (S-CVI) was 0.93, and average disagreement on content validity (S-CVI/UA) was 0.67 for all 33 items included on the ISLLC survey. Based on criteria for acceptable validity reported by Polit and Beck (2004), the ISLLC survey had an acceptable content validity of 0.93.

Content and face validity for the interview questions was established by using a rating scale developed by Simon and White (2016). For content validity, the rating scale asked expert reviewers to rate the interview questions on qualitative measures, such as clarity, wordiness, use of jargon, and use of technical language. Based on a four-point scale, the reviewers' rating of the interview questions had a mean score of 3.33, which met expectations based on the rating scale.



Average face validity for the interview questions was 0.85, and average content validity was 0.83. S-CVI/UA was 0.53, which is reported but not included in the average per Polit and Beck (2004). Reviewers' feedback on specific items was used to modify the scale as suggested by Polit and Beck (2004). These data will be reported in the final version of the study.

### Qualitative Data Analysis

Consistent with qualitative data analysis, a system of coding was used to identify patterns and themes from transcripts of the semi-structured interviews. To begin coding, the PI read the transcripts of each participant's interview repeatedly while listening to the audio recording. Notes about the participants' interviews were written, and, in some cases, a debriefing form was used to summarize key concepts. This phase, called the initial coding phase, revealed common themes across participants. After completing the initial coding phase, the researcher organized themes into categories and subcategories. Finally, themes or patterns of responses were identified and coded by the researcher. All coding took place manually or using NVIVO software for Mac. Table 3 illustrates the codes used during each phase of this study.

Table 3  
Research Codes

Initial Coding	Pattern Coding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Instructional leadership</li> <li>● Establishing expectations</li> <li>● Instructional practice</li> <li>● Positive climate</li> <li>● Miscellaneous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General quotes</li> <li>● Definition of instructional leadership</li> <li>● General impact of in-service on instructional practice</li> <li>● General impact on in-service on establishing expectations</li> <li>● General impact on in-service on establishing a positive climate</li> <li>● Improvement of pre-service on instructional practice</li> <li>● Improvement of pre-service on establishing expectations</li> <li>● Improvement of pre-service on establishing a positive climate</li> <li>● In-service training</li> </ul>

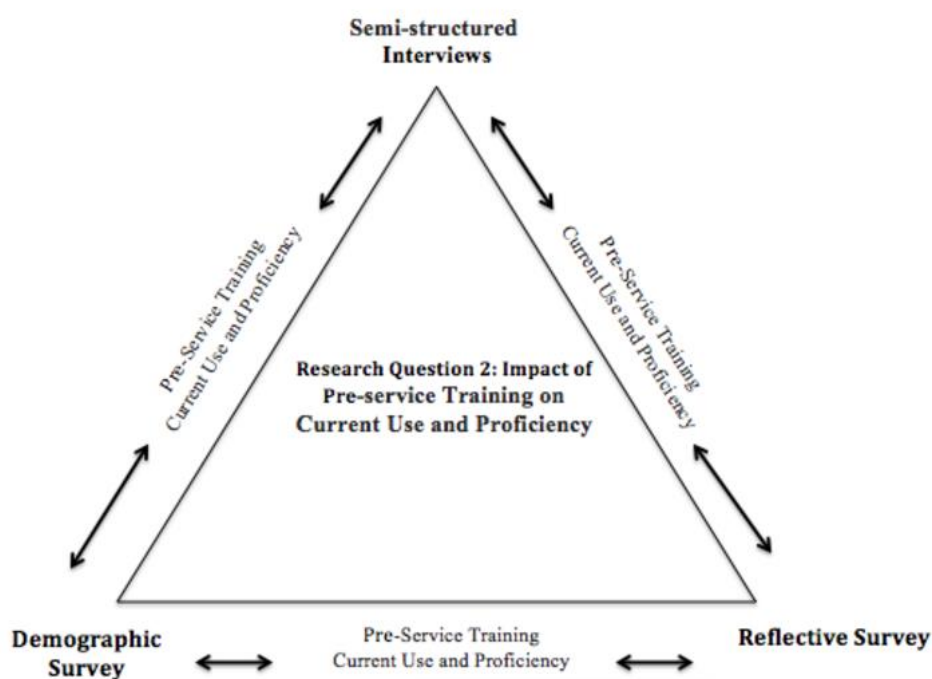
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- Outliers

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Following data analysis, the data in this study were triangulated to address the central research question, examining the impact of pre-service training programs on in-service training.

According to Oliver-Hoyo and Allen (2006), “triangulation involves the careful reviewing of data collected through different methods in order to achieve a more accurate and valid estimate of qualitative results for a particular construct” (p. 42). The data for this study were triangulated by analyzing the findings from each type of data collection and then examining them for emerging themes that answered the research questions. Figure 2 illustrates the triangulation of the data for this study.



*Figure 2.* Method of triangulation.

### **Summary**

This section described the methodology for this study, including the participants, data collection, and qualitative data analysis. Twelve principals participated in surveys and semi-structured interviews, which helped the researcher address the research questions for this study. A process of triangulation was used to analyze the data. The results of the interviews and surveys are discussed in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

### Findings

#### *Introduction*

The purpose of this study was to explore principals' perceptions of the impact of their pre-service training programs on their current practices as instructional leaders. Specifically, the study was to answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How do in-service principals trained on the ISLLC standards define instructional leadership in their own practice?

Research Question 2: How do principals describe the impact of their pre-service principal preparation programs on their in-service practices as instructional leaders?

Research Question 3: What is the perception of school leaders about the degree to which three key instructional leadership functions from the ISLLC standards—supervising instructional practice, establishing a positive school environment, and establishing high expectations—were emphasized in their pre-service principal training?

Leadership is essential to the academic success of students. In 1996, the CCSSO developed a set of standards for states to use as a guide for effective leadership skillsets. This resulted in the creation of the ISLLC) from which 35 states adopted standards to guide policy and practice related to school leadership. The ISLLC standards are one of many leadership development approaches that attempt to identify high-quality school leadership skillsets. School leadership is broadly defined and discussed from various perspectives. As one of the most recent national school leadership initiatives, the ISLLC standards can provide a contextual framework to narrow our definition of school leadership.

Currently, there are several areas of concern regarding leadership preparation. Although research has identified skillsets and attributes that are necessary for successful school leadership,

researchers contend that principal preparation programs fail to prepare graduates for the role of instructional leader, especially in reference to students with disabilities (Lynch, 2012). The failure to prepare graduates for their role as instructional leaders results in the challenge of not meeting today's mandate of increasing student achievement as principals obtain positions in the field. There is a need to assess the efficacy of pre-service leadership programs in preparing graduates for the role of instructional leaders in order to meet the mandate of increasing student achievement. Because new mandates now require immediate and significant increases in student outcomes or school leaders are penalized by sanctions, leadership preparation programs must effectively equip candidates with the skills needed to be successful leaders. A further examination could offer insight into creating a successful model for principal preparedness programs.

### **Findings from the Initial Survey: Demographic Data**

#### ***Sample Participants***

Demographic data on the participants were collected using an online survey tool with 14 questions about a) age, b) ethnicity, c) education, d) years in leadership, e) academic major, and f) type of school where they served as principal. Table 3 lists summary information about the participants. Detailed descriptions of each participant's demographic data are reviewed below.

Principal A was a 49-year-old African-American male with a master's degree in educational leadership/administration and who was the principal of a middle school in an urban district and had 12 years of experience in school administration. Principal B was a 50-year-old African-American male with a doctoral degree in educational leadership/administration and who had 15 years of administrative experience and worked in an urban district as the principal of an elementary school. Principal C was a 43-year-old African-American female with a master's

degree in educational leadership/administration and who had seven years of administrative experience and served as the principal of a charter middle school in an urban district.

Principal D was a 48-year-old African-American female with a master's degree in educational leadership and who had 11 years of administrative experience and was the principal of a middle school in an urban district. Principal E was a 45-year-old African-American female with a master's degree and who was the principal of a middle school in an urban district and who had 18 years of experience in school administration. Principal F was a 34-year-old Caucasian male with a doctoral degree in educational administration/leadership and 4.5 years of administrative experience and who served as a high school principal in a small town.

Principal G was a 45-year-old with a master's degree in educational leadership/administration and who had 18 years of administrative experience and served as an elementary school principal in a suburban school setting. Principal H was a 43-year-old African-American female with 8 years of administrative experience and who currently serves as a middle school principal in an urban district. Principal I was a 41-year-old female principal of a suburban elementary school and who had 10 years of administrative experience and a doctoral degree in educational leadership/administration.

Principal J was a 53-year-old African-American male with 15 years of administrative experience and who was serving as an elementary school principal in an urban district. Principal K was a 60-year-old European-American female with 10 years of administrative experience and a master's degree in educational leadership/administration and who worked in an elementary school setting in an urban district. Principal L was a 45-year-old African-American male with a doctoral degree in educational leadership/administration and 15 years of experience as a school administrator and was currently serving as the principal of a suburban middle school.

*Table 3*  
*Demographic Variables*

Demographic Variable	Data
Average Age	47 years of age
Education	Masters: 7 Doctorate: 5
Graduate school concentrations	Educational leadership/administration
Gender	Female: 5 Male: 7
Ethnicity	African-American: 7 European-American: 5

*Table 4*  
*Participant Interview Data*

Participant	Interview Date	Interview Time
Principal A	August 31, 2016	5:17 pm – 6:24 pm (67 min)
Principal B	September 13, 2016	7:27 pm – 8:33 pm (66 min)
Principal C	September 18, 2016	2:00 pm – 2:38 pm (38 min)
Principal D	September 18, 2016	2:45 pm – 3:26 pm (41 min)
Principal E	September 18, 2016	1:07 pm – 1:43 pm (36 min)
Principal F	September 19, 2016	4:14 pm – 5:05 pm (50 min)
Principal G	September 21, 2016	4:45 pm – 5:23 pm (38 min)
Principal H	September 22, 2016	7:45 pm – 8:44 pm (59 min)
Principal I	September 26, 2016	5:58 pm – 6:41 pm (43 min)
Principal J	September 28, 2016	4:00 pm – 4:50 pm (50 min)
Principal K	October 11, 2016	5:54 pm – 6:55 pm (61 min)
Principal L	October 16, 2016	3:59 pm – 4:33 pm (33 min)

### Findings from the Reflective Survey

Each participant completed a reflective survey containing 16 functions from the ISLLC standards that related to the construct of *instructional leadership* and the corresponding functions associated with it for the purpose of this study: 1) instructional practice, 2) establishing high expectations, and 3) establishing a positive learning environment. Each of these functions contained a set of functions associated with it, and participants were asked to rate on a 3-point Likert scale (1=low, 2=moderate, and 3=high) their experiences with the functions based on three measures: 1) the degree of training they received in their principal preparation program on the function, 2) their current proficiency with the function, and 3) the amount that they use the function in their current practice. Results of their survey are described below and detailed in the corresponding table, which also highlights the area most highly rated for each function.

#### Establishing High Expectations

The function or behavior that was associated with a high degree of training, proficiency, and use was Function 1, *collaboratively developing and establishing a mission and vision*. The function or behavior that was associated with a lower degree of training, proficiency, and use was Function 2, *using data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning*.

Table 5

*Outcomes of the Reflective Survey of Functions Associated with Establishing Expectations*

**Table 5-1**

#### **Shared Vision and Mission**

Function 1: I collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision and mission.

Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
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High	8	8	7
Moderate	3	4	5
Low	1	0	0

**Table 5-2**  
**Identify Goals**

Function 2: I collect and use data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
High	5	5	8
Moderate	3	7	3
Low	4	0	1

**Table 5-3**  
**Create and Implement Plans**

Function 3: I create and implement plans to achieve goals.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
High	3	10	10
Moderate	8	2	1
Low	1	0	1

**Table 5-4**  
**Promote Continuous and Sustainable Improvement**

Function 4: I promote continuous and sustainable improvement.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
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High	3	7	8
Moderate	8	5	3
Low	1	0	1

**Table 5-5****Monitor and Evaluate Progress and Revise Plans**

Function 5: I monitor and evaluate progress and revise plans.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
High	4	7	8
Moderate	5	5	4
Low	3	0	0

*Establishing a Positive Learning Environment:* For this set of functions, participants said that they received the most preparation in promoting and protecting the welfare and safety of students and staff, and that they used it the most in their current practice. However, they received the least amount of training in supporting families and caregivers, but they also used it the least in their current practice. Table 6 lists the outcomes of the reflective survey in the area of establishing a positive learning environment.

**Table 6****Outcomes of the Reflective Survey Associated with a Positive Learning Environment****Table 6-1****Promote and Protect Welfare and Safety**

Function 6: I promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
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High	5	12	12
Moderate	7	0	0
Low	0	0	0

**Table 6-2****Teacher Organization Time for Quality Instruction**

Function 7: I ensure that teacher and organizational time is focused to support quality instruction and student learning.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
High	5	9	10
Moderate	7	3	2
Low	0	0	0

**Table 6-3****Build and Sustain Positive Relationships**

Function 8: I build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
High	4	10	10
Moderate	2	2	2
Low	6	0	0

*Instructional Practice:* Table 7 lists the outcomes of the reflective survey items associated with ensuring effective instructional practices. Principals were most prepared to supervise instruction and use their training in their current work as school leaders. They reported that they were least prepared to develop data systems and monitor curriculum and instruction,

although they used it frequently in their current work as school leaders.

*Table 7*

*Outcomes of the Reflective Survey: Instructional Practices*

**Table 7-1**

***Develop Instructional and Leadership Capacity of Staff***

Function 9: I develop the instructional and leadership capacity of staff.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
High	5	9	9
Moderate	6	3	3
Low	1	0	0

**Table 7-2**

***Promote the Use of Technology***

Function 10: I promote the use of the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
High	4	7	4
Moderate	6	4	6
Low	2	1	2

**Table 7-3**

***Monitor and Evaluate Instructional Programs***

Function 11: I monitor and evaluate the impact of the instructional program.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
High	4	7	8
Moderate	6	5	4

Low	2	0	0
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**Table 7-4**  
**Supervise Instruction**

Function 12: I supervise instruction.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
High	8	11	12
Moderate	2	1	0
Low	2	0	0

**Table 7-5**  
**Use or Develop Data Systems to Identify Student Strengths**

Function 13: I use or develop data systems and other sources of information (e.g., test scores, teacher reports, and student work samples) to identify unique strengths and needs of students, gaps between current outcomes and goals, and areas for improvement.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
High	4	7	8
Moderate	3	5	4
Low	5	0	0

**Table 7-6**  
**Provide Coherent and Effective Guidance**

Function 14: I provide coherent, effective guidance of rigorous curriculum and instruction, aligning content standards, curriculum, teaching, assessments, professional development, assessments, and evaluation methods.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
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High	5	7	8
Moderate	4	5	4
Low	3	0	0

**Table 7-7*****Provide and Monitor Differentiated Teaching Strategies***

Function 15: I provide and monitor effects of differentiated teaching strategies, curricular materials, educational technologies, and other resources appropriate to address diverse student populations, including students with disabilities, cultural and linguistic differences, gifted and talented, disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, or other factors affecting learning.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
High	2	5	8
Moderate	3	7	4
Low	7	0	0

**Table 7-8*****Use Aligned Standards-Based Accountability Data***

Function 16: I develop and appropriately use aligned standards-based accountability data to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
High	4	4	10
Moderate	7	8	2
Low	1	0	0

**Table 7-9*****Regular Analyses and Disaggregation of Data***

Function 17: I guide regular analyses and disaggregation of data about all students to improve instructional programs.

	Degree of training in	Current proficiency	Amount of use in
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	your principal preparation program		your current practice
High	2	4	10
Moderate	6	8	2
Low	4	0	0

### Findings from the Semi-Structured Interview

Principals participated in a 60-minute interview with the PI. They received a copy of the ISLLC functions associated with this study and then referred to them to answer questions throughout the interview. Table 8 lists the participants' interview data. Each participant's responses to questions associated with the research questions are described below.

**Table 8**

#### *Participant Information*

Participant	Interview Date	Interview Time
Principal A	August 31, 2016	5:17 pm – 6:24 pm (67 min)
Principal B	September 13, 2016	7:27 pm – 8:33 pm (66 min)
Principal C	September 18, 2016	2:00 pm – 2:38 pm (38 min)
Principal D	September 18, 2016	2:45 pm – 3:26 pm (41 min)
Principal E	September 18, 2016	1:07 pm – 1:43 pm (36 min)
Principal F	September 19, 2016	4:14 pm – 5:05 pm (50 min)
Principal G	September 21, 2016	4:45 pm – 5:23 pm (38 min)
Principal H	September 22, 2016	7:45 pm – 8:44 pm (59 min)
Principal I	September 26, 2016	5:58 pm – 6:41 pm (42 min)
Principal J	September 28, 2016	4:00 pm – 4:50 pm (50 min)

Principal K	October 11, 2016	5:54 pm – 6:55 pm (61 min)
Principal L	October 16, 2016	3:59 pm – 4:33 pm (33 min)

Research Question 1: How do in-service principals trained on the ISLLC standards define instructional leadership in their own practice?

For this research question, principals were asked three general questions: 1) “How do you describe yourself as a principal or school leader?” 2) “How do you define instructional leadership?” and 3) “What are your strengths and weaknesses as an instructional leader?”

Generally, when asked to define effective instructional leadership during semi-structured interviews, principals provided definitions that relied on more traditional practices associated with instructional leadership. That is, the participating principals defined instructional leadership based on traditional practices such as observing teachers, implementing best practices in the field, staying current with new changes to the field, and providing support and feedback in a way that was helpful to the teacher. For instance, Principal D defined instructional leadership as

“the guidance of the curriculum, of the standards, the alignment between all the factors that go into to helping students to achieve, and to help teachers to be effective. Whether it’s modeling, whether it’s unpacking the standards, whether it’s making sure that the lesson plans are aligned to specification by the district and you know what the state requires as to the standard alignment. An effective instructional leader really checks for those things, and when you’re doing your walkthroughs, and all the time you can’t do it to be honest, but when you’re doing your walk-throughs, you really try to look for that alignment and that that thread that goes through, otherwise some people will really do whatever they want to do; ‘Well, this is the way I’ve always done it, this is the way I’ll continue to do it.’” (Source: Principal D)

Similarly, Principal C defined an effective instructional leader as

“one that stays current but also does not abandon other instructional practices that have been sound in their organization or with their clientele. Although instructional practices change and there’s new trends and ideas. I think that an effective structural leader knows the clientele and the teachers that are you’re building uses the ones that are going to be most effective for those



particular people. It's like a prescription." (Source: Principal C)

Using similarly traditional language, Principal H defined an instructional leader as a

"person who guides the teaching and learning within their building (Source: Principal H)."

However, she also noted that effective instructional leaders differ based on their building and leadership styles, and need to be able to provide effective, non-critical feedback to teachers to achieve results:

"And you have to be able to give feedback in a way that doesn't demoralize the person, and you have to be able to provide support, too, so that if you were saying to someone I need you to correct XYZ, you have to be able to provide them support to correct it, especially with the changing standards and all the things that we have to deal with as educators that may not have necessarily been in consideration in the past. Especially for more veteran teachers, the students that we work with today are very different from the students we worked with even five years ago. So a lot more is expected from teachers and administrators, and sometimes it is a juggling act." (Source: Principal H).

When asked how they defined themselves as principals, however, participants' responses shifted from traditional practices to more specific behaviors that were individualized to their backgrounds and strengths. For instance, Principal D elaborated on the term *instructional leader* by adding that she was a creative leader, too:

"I'm definitely a human relations person, where I feel that relationships are a very strong foundation for any work that you do in education and in my school. I'm a strong leader, but I have work to do, and I have places to grow. And I try to instill in my staff to build their leadership. I'm very hands-on. I like to model for teachers, I like one-on-one discussions. I actually enjoy the evaluation process, because I get to have that one-on-one time with teachers. You know you walk through and you observe, and you do all the things you're supposed to do, but you really don't get a whole lot of sit-down time one-on-one unless someone's having a problem." (Source: Principal D)

Principal B described himself as a great leader because he encouraged staff in a way that improved student performance:

"I regard myself as a very strong leadership, leader; very assertive, and I get results. What I mean by results is, I'm able to get staff members to perform at minimum levels of expectations or, you know, ensure that whatever encouragement I can offer them, I do so. And I've been able to attain significant increases in student performance. And so I believe that is the supporting evidence

for my being a great leader as a principal.” (Source: Principal B)

Another principal’s response was closely aligned with language in the ISLLC standards: “I would define myself as a principal who is focused on academic excellence and ensuring the safety and security of both children and staff on a daily basis. That is my primary focus” (Source: Principal J).

Finally, another principal used the term *servant leader* to describe himself as an instructional leader:

“I see myself as really a servant leader. Someone that tells the capacity of not only your mom’s demonstration team but also their teaching team. Someone who inspires and motivates their staff members, the custodial staff all the way up to even my superiors. Someone who really puts in and focuses on the mission, vision, and goals that we set forth. Someone who is able to move the vision forward a little further then a vice principal or someone who is in a supervisory position.” (Source: Principal F)

When asked to describe their strengths and weaknesses as instructional leaders, principals used even more specific language. Common responses for strengths included organization, creative problem-solving, and consistency in instructional supervision (e.g., visiting classrooms regularly). However, principals had common weaknesses, including instructional practice, looking at data, and addressing politics in their schools and districts. Principal J’s synopsis of his strengths and weaknesses was probably most representative of those noted by other participants: “Organization is a strength, creative strength, politics is a weakness, and instructional practice is a weakness.” (Source: Principal J). Similarly, Principal I noted her weaknesses and strengths: “I think organization is my biggest strength. I think that is what allows me to maximize my effectiveness and ability to complete tasks quicker than other administrators. I would say maybe a weakness might be the political focus that superintendency comes with. (Source: Principal I).

Research Question 2: What are principals’ perceptions of the impact of their pre-service principal training on their in-service practices as instructional leaders?

For this question, principals were asked to describe their pre-service experiences and provide any recommendations for improvement. Their responses to these questions were then used to answer Research Question 2. Their answers are detailed in the following section and categorized by level of impact on their current practice: positive impact, negative impact, or no impact.

*Positive Impact of Pre-Service Programs:* Few principals stated that their pre-service program had a positive impact. When they noted a positive aspect of their pre-service program, it was a very specific component, such as a particular administrator or mentor, the benefit of a cohort model, or a strong area of training, such as teacher evaluation. One principal, however, stated that her pre-service experience was very positive in preparing her to become an instructional leader:

“I was definitely prepared in my pre-service. I think that that was kind of drove into you that instructional practices that’s what you’re there for. To get the highest instructional practice, and support, and give feedback for improvement, and that everything was built around the instructional program” (Source: Principal D).

She also noted, however, that her district was instrumental in supporting her principal training:

“I think that the district used to give us a lot of training for aspiring administrators. We were in a lot of cohorts back in the day...that was really instrumental in preparing us to be strong instructional leaders and to help us in our instructional practices.” (Source: Principal D).”

Principal D also noted that the ISLLC standards were instrumental in helping her to apply for school leadership positions. She stated that she used them to frame her background when applying for jobs and continues to use them today even as she supervises aspiring principals:

“I still use them, and I invite aspiring administrators to use them, just to give them a foundation and see, you know, where you fall in each one of those areas, and where do you need to strengthen, and what do you need to work on.”

*Negative Impact of Pre-Service Programs:* In contrast, the majority of principals had some strong negative comments about their pre-service programs, primarily about the lack of practical experience to prepare them for the job of a principal.

“The difficulty with that is that you’re not necessarily afforded the opportunity to understand or see everything that a principal does. You do go through a fairly rigorous internship experience but that’s really what it is, trying to memorize the ISLLC standards and trying your best to relate them to real life or real-world experiences of which you’re not entirely a part of because you’re just a classroom teacher. So, if you’re asking whether or not my principal program truly prepared me, I think it prepares you on the theoretical side, but the practical hands-on side you’re only going to learn with experience.” (Source: Principal F)

Principal F expanded on his negative experience by specifying the issue of theory to practice, which was a recurring theme for participants in this study.

“I don’t know if this will help or hurt, but I do feel that the university that I attended focused maybe too much on the standards, and by that I mean every single one of my research papers from what I recall, if every other sentence wasn’t tied to a standard, then points were deducted. I don’t think that allows the intern, if you will, or the individual preparing to become a principal the opportunity to reflect on necessarily other areas but to be a little more open about his or her decision-making process or his or her leadership style. Because the truth is the principalship is not black and white, and although their standards are an excellent starting point and they do cover a broad range of what we do day in and day out as principals, there are areas that you can tweak if you will or areas that are not going to necessarily follow the standard per se.” (Source: Principal F).

This principal, however, did note a specific area of his training program that was strong in his doctoral program, which he attended after becoming a principal: assessment, accountability, and vision: “I also want to say that as far as assessment and accountability and vision, I learned a tremendous amount and really...I was really able to connect theory to practice in my doctoral program (Source: Principal F).”

An interesting comment that was common among principals was the use of supplemental

training that helped them grow in their pre-service principal training. This generally included mentors and cohorts. Principal I, for instance, noted the following:

“I liked that it was a cohort; there was a lot of networking. I cannot imagine going to a traditional program. I do not think that that would’ve been beneficial for a true leader because you would have to get along with many different people, and a cohort model allows you to do that. That was the best thing about it (Source: Principal I).”

Like Principal F, she commented that the preparation program needed more practical experience:

“Although they do infuse some on-the-job experiences, they can increase that. What I mean is that they need to take away the textbook and do what we are asking teachers to do; problem-based projects or instruction, here’s a problem, how would you handle it and what would you do? Rather than saying using this theory or that theory or here’s this and this is what that people would do. I think that discovery learning and problem-based instruction kind of was a missing factor. I do not want to read a book about budgets, I want to dive into it see what the problems are and how would you fix it. Because when you get a principal job or a superintendent job that is what you do. You do not go to a book. You are like how do I see this, and that’s what you learn in on-the-job training.” (Source: Principal F).

In reviewing the participants’ responses to Research Question 2, *What are principals’ perceptions of the impact of their pre-service principal training on their in-service practices as instructional leader?*

The research is consistent in providing the evidence that strong instructional leadership capacities are critical to the improvement of student outcomes. Effective school research supports the notion that “effective” principals create positive school learning cultures with high expectations for all students (Edmonds, 1979). Hallinger (2003) went on to identify a comprehensive set of instructional leadership behaviors that affected classroom practice, such as framing school goals, maintaining high visibility, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress.

Past research supports the findings in this study that correlated with the majority of the respondents, which indicated that they had an overall negative experience in their pre-service principal training program. Hale and Moorman (2003) also reported that neither organized

professional development nor the formal preparation programs based in graduate studies adequately prepare principals to improve student achievement. Many of the respondents indicated that, although relevant to their work experience, the pre-service preparation programs' emphasis on school law, finance, and human resource management fell short of adequately preparing school leaders for the role of instructional leadership. In 2007, the Wallace Foundation concluded that pre-service programs should place more emphasis on the instructional leadership component. The Wallace report goes on to conclude that pre-service training programs must seek to enhance the integration of theory and practice, and provide a better preparation of school leaders.

Research Question 3: What is the perception of school leaders about the degree to which the three instructional leadership functions of instructional practice, school environment, and positive expectations were emphasized in their pre-service principal training?

For this research question, participants were asked to reflect on their principal preparation programs and describe if each area of focus for this study (establishing high expectations, establishing a positive learning environment, and instructional practices) was emphasized and, if so, how. Their responses are described below based on the following categories: highly emphasized, low emphasis, or no emphasis.

*High emphasis on Instructional Practice:* In the area of instructional practice, principals said that they were trained to give support and provide feedback for improvement. Differences seemed to center around the type of program principals attended. For instance, two principals who attended one particular program in New Jersey all noted that they were well-prepared for instructional practice:

“Well, I was definitely prepared in my pre-service. I think that that was kind of driven

into you: That instructional practice, that's what you're there for. To get the highest instructional practice, and support, and give feedback for improvement, and that everything was built around the instructional program" (Source: Principal D).

Similarly, a principal at a different program said,

"I feel I was well prepared. I cannot say enough that it's an excellent program. I have friends who were in other programs who were interviewing for jobs and would borrow books or information that I had in my program and I would share with them. It was really good" (Source: Principal E).

*Low Emphasis on Instructional Practice:* In a similar manner, principals who reported low emphasis noted that their programs did not have a focus on the area of instructional practice: "I don't think our preparation program kind of focuses on this" (Source: Principal I). Others noted that, while they were trained, they did not personally focus on it or need to focus on it in their program:

"Did my program talk about those things? Yes. I did not spend time looking at real data, but did I do that as a teacher which I was with when I was yes. Didn't send the data. Yes I did. And pedagogy—if you're in effective educator, you're going to know the pedagogy for what you're teaching" (Source: Principal H)."

## **Establishing Expectations**

*High emphasis on Establishing High Expectations:* Principals who reported that their programs emphasized establishing high expectations were able to provide specific examples of their training experience in this area:

"In my pre-service, we talked a lot about establishing expectations and setting the tone and, you know, setting the stage for success and how important that was for whether it's a

classroom or whether it's a whole school. Whether it's a small group, whether it's a professional development session, you have to set the tone, the expectations for excellence." (Principal D). Another principal also provided specific examples of his training in this area: "I do recall that we did have some classes where we talked about creating a vision, but then working down from there and having one of the expectations of your school and ensuring that everyone understands those expectations. So I do feel that there was some of that in my program, yes." (Source: Principal G)

*Low or no Emphasis on Establishing High Expectations:* Principals who reported that their programs did not emphasize establishing high expectations noted that, although they remembered specific training exercises, they felt that this area was innate to them as an individual principal and that they did not need to be trained.

"I have to tell you that I do not remember a lot about that particular part of the program. In terms of setting of mine, because it was quite a while ago, I remember us going to the LLC standards and I remember like one exercise and one of the questions was do you believe all students can learn to move to that side of the room and just me and another student stayed in the section that said that we believe that all students can learn. So I don't, I forgot what the conversation was with the professor, basically said you know you should really believe that all students can learn. So I think that something that's within a person, I don't think that something that you can tell somebody. You can't state that, I don't think. You can make a statement that all students can learn, but if someone says yeah I believe it but it's more than saying it but what are your actions, are your actions supporting what your mouth is saying?" (Source: Principal H)

In a similar manner, Principal I also thought that establishing expectations was a natural behavior for her: "I think holding people accountable for me was not something I learned in-service, pre-service, outside of the workshop. It was basically what I willing to do and probably came naturally for me (Source: Principal I)." Principal C made a similar comment, noting that:

"I'm not sure if [my school] really established or taught me how to establish expectations in a school. And a lot of it I think I got from my own reading, leveraging leadership books that give instruction, going to other schools that were doing great things, and then I took some more of those things from the experience since I've been a principal versus my teacher program." (Source: Principal C).

A closer analysis of Research 3 *What is the perception of school leaders about the degree*



*to which the three instructional leadership functions of instructional practice, school environment and positive expectations were emphasized in their pre-service principal training?*

The participants in this study varied in their responses as it relates to their perspective pre-service experiences instructional leadership functions categorized as instructional practice, school environment and establishing expectations.

### **Triangulation and Themes**

The central research question in this study was Research Question 2: “What are principals’ perceptions of the impact of their pre-service principal training on their in-service practices as instructional leaders?” Triangulating the data from the surveys and semi-structured interviews suggested that three recurring themes emerged. Figure 3 illustrates the outcomes of triangulation for this study.

The first theme was *alternative or supplemental training*. This theme was defined as the use of supports outside of pre-service training for preparation as instructional leaders. Specifically, few principals thought that their pre-service program was the primary training mechanism for their preparation as instructional leaders. Instead, principals noted that they used natural skillsets, mentors, doctoral programs, and peer cohorts to develop as instructional leaders.

The second theme was *embedded practice*. This theme was characterized by the frequent observation that their programs emphasized theory and even the ISLLC standards but did not embed practical opportunities to use them in a real-world context that would prepare them for their jobs. This theme was the most oft-cited reason for reporting a negative impact from their pre-service programs.

The third theme was *function disparities*. This theme was defined as vast differences between the degree of training provided and the use of a particular function in their current

practice. Sixteen functions were assessed on the reflective survey, but only one was highly emphasized in training, current proficiency, and amount of current use in practice: Supervising instruction. The others were either moderately or minimally emphasized in training while being highly required in their current roles as instructional leaders. Based on their interviews, it seems that programs emphasize particular areas of instructional leadership, but context after program completion determined its use.

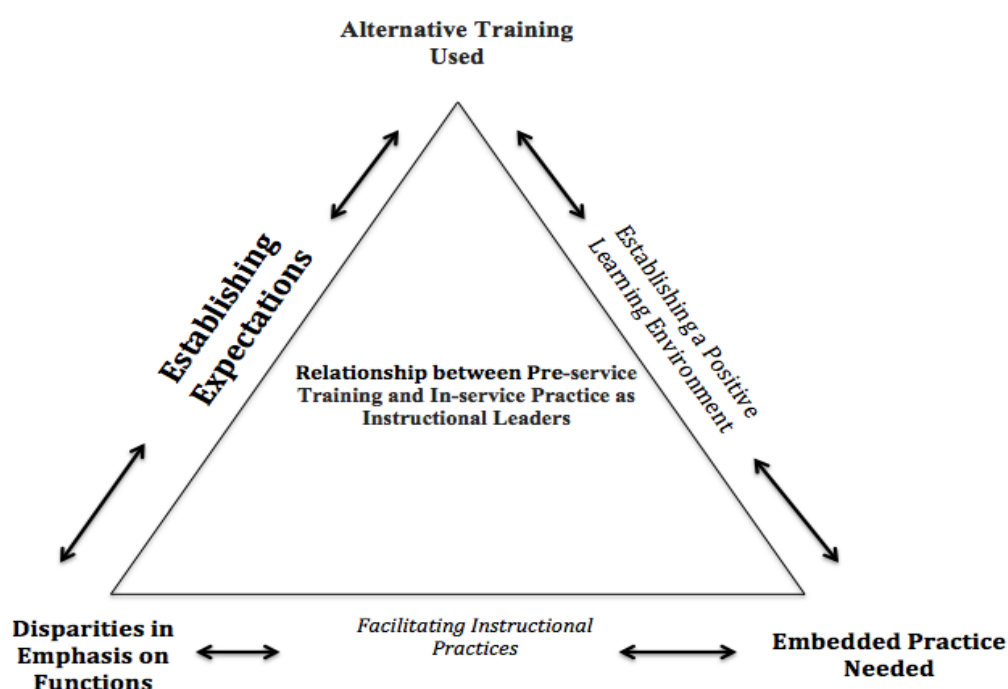


Figure 3. Triangulation of Research Findings

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

### **Summary**

New Jersey has more than 2500 public schools that serve approximately 1.4 million students in grades pre-K to 12. Principals as school leaders are key to the success or failure of the school programs that serve students in New Jersey. School principals have to serve as front-line managers, small business executives, the battlefield commanders charged with leading their teams to new levels of effectiveness. In the new era of high-stakes testing and accountability, where school leaders are expected to demonstrate bottom-line results and use of data to drive decisions, the skills and knowledge of principals matter more and more as policy-makers demand results. The rise of school choice and more flexible teacher compensation and hiring has granted school leaders the opportunity to exercise discretion and operate with previously unprecedented latitude. District leaders are clear that they are now required to hold new and more demanding expectations for principals (Hess & Kelly 2005).

Current educational realities require that research now focuses on identifying leadership behaviors within educational institutions that seek to advance student achievement. Many in the field propose that leaders can learn the skillsets and disciplines that will assist them in staying focused on improving teaching and learning. It is equally important that school leaders be aware of and properly manage certain obstacles that prevent the educational environment from reaching its academic goals. Current research consistently acknowledges school leadership as a crucial factor in enhancing teaching and learning, yet the research has been relatively random in how school leaders are prepared and supported as they navigate the challenges of improving student outcomes.

The purpose of this study was to conduct research to determine what factors promote effective school leadership. Currently, there are several areas of concern regarding leadership preparation. Although research has identified skillsets and attributes necessary for successful school leadership, researchers contend that principal preparation programs fail to prepare graduates for the role of instructional leader, especially in reference to students with disabilities (Lynch, 2012). The failure to prepare graduates for their role as instructional leaders results in the challenge of not meeting today's mandate of increasing student achievement as principals obtain positions in the field. There is a need to assess the efficacy of pre-service leadership programs in preparing graduates for the role of instructional leaders in order to meet the mandate of increasing student achievement.

This exploratory qualitative study identified several key themes that provide insight into the effectiveness of pre-service principal preparation programs in New Jersey when preparing future administrators to be instructional leaders. Twelve in-service principals of New Jersey schools participated in interviews and survey questions to investigate their perspectives on the impact of pre-service programs on their in-service practices as instructional leaders. Instructional leadership comprised three sub-categories based on the ISLLC standards, including instructional practices, establishing high expectations for schools, and establishing a positive learning environment. Results of the study indicated that, while principal preparation programs provided access to theory and tools, they were largely not the source of preparation for instructional leadership. Instead, principals learned to be instructional leaders through mentoring programs and in-service training. Of particular use was the cohort model in pre-service training, which helped principals complete programs successfully. Most participants in this study indicated that principal preparation programs could be improved by embedding opportunities for practice into

the programs.

### Conclusions

This study assessed principals' perceptions of the impact of their pre-service principal preparation programs on their instructional leadership practices in their current work and the proficiency of their instructional leadership skills. Twelve principals completed demographic and reflective surveys that assessed their perceptions of their pre-service principal preparation programs, as well as their current proficiency as instructional leaders. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted by the Principal Investigator to address the central research questions in this study. Results showed that most principals thought that their principal preparation programs had a high impact on their ability to establish a positive school climate and set high expectations for a school, but had a low impact on their abilities to facilitate instructional practice.

Additionally, results suggested that most principals were responsible for using instructional practice in their daily work as principals, although it was not emphasized highly in their principal training programs. As a result, principals relied on alternative methods of training, such as cohorts and mentors, to strengthen areas where they needed training, and supplemented their leadership teams with individuals who were strong in instructional practice.

The results of this study suggest three key recommendations about how principal training programs can become more effective when training future principals to be instructional leaders:

1. *Principal preparation programs need practice opportunities embedded in the program.*

The data in this study suggest that most principals think that their pre-service programs can be improved by including real life practice opportunities. For example, one principal noted that they were "not necessarily afforded the opportunity to understand or see

everything that a principal does” during their principal training program. The majority of the principals who participated shared similar comments throughout the interview portion of this study. These observations from the principals in the current study are supported by the existing literature on instructional leadership, which indicates that successful principal training programs must provide opportunities for tasks related to instructional leadership instead of focusing primarily on theory. Catano and Stronge (2006), for instance, noted that “An importance must be placed on the tasks that facilitate instructional leadership, school improvement, and student achievement that has been historically overlooked, if not non-existent, aspects of internship.”

2. *Principal preparation programs need to emphasize instructional practice.* The outcomes of this study also indicated that most principals felt they would have benefited from an increased emphasis on learning specific instructional practices, such as data collection/analysis, curriculum and pedagogy, instructional delivery, organizing instructional time, and delivering assessment and accountability systems. Hallinger (1992) noted that “(pre-service) programs lack applicable and relevant leadership preparation with content that lacks focus on instructional leadership,” and that this “results in not meeting today’s mandate of increasing student achievement as principals obtain positions in the field” (Hallinger, 1992).
3. *Instructional leadership training needs to continue beyond pre-service preparation programs.* The outcomes of this study also suggest that school leaders who are new in their principalship roles could benefit from additional formal training once in the role of principal. The suggestions included a range of in-service experiences, including mandatory term requirements for vice/assistant principal positions, formalized in-service

cohort arrangements, and participation in-service professional development that will provide support networks and models for novice school leaders. As Principal B noted:

“One of the reasons why I was able to improve my craft here is because I was involved in whole-school reform and one of the fundamental underpinnings of...the southern regional education board with...programs I implemented was transforming cultures into high-performing cultures and creating that belief with adults, including teachers and administrators, that students can achieve.”

The notion that additional in-service training would benefit new school leaders is supported by research conducted by Darling-Hammond, LaPoint, Meyerson, and Orr (2007), who noted that mentoring and other forms of principal training must occur throughout an individual’s career.

Since the findings from this study indicate that there may be a difference between how school leaders perceive the pre-service principal preparation programs and the actual capacities required for school leaders to effect positive student outcomes, based on the interviews conducted with the participants, this researcher recommends that the following practices be included in school leadership training programs.

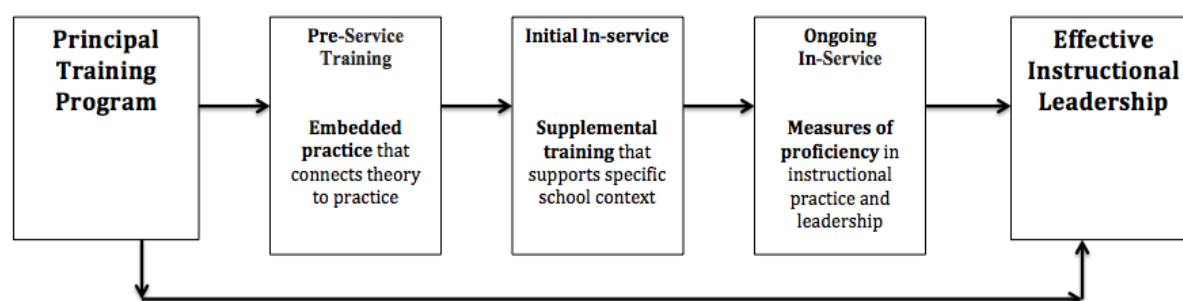
1. Expansion of pre-service internships and practicums to require real school challenges that engage in authentic problem-solving through problem-based projects, activities, and instruction.
2. A systematized process for pre-service preparation programs that seeks to assist potential school leaders in making the transition from meaningful theoretical frameworks such as the ISLLC standards to practical measurable capacities before gaining in-service experiences.
3. A licensure process that provides a continuum of practical trainings well after the acquisition of positions in school leadership and makes connections to theoretical to actual practice.
4. Extended practicum experiences that allow for unfettered access to school leaders’ day-

to-day work requirements, including parent and teacher interactions.

5. The formation of in-service cohort programs for new school leaders to provide networking support systems for new school leaders.
6. Mandatory assistant principalship terms that require the demonstration of school leadership capacities prior to the acquisition of role of principalship.

### **Model of Effective Instructional Leadership Training (EILT)**

Based on the results of this study, the model displayed in Figure 4 reflects the Principal Investigator's recommendations for embedding practical opportunities for instructional leadership practice into principal preparation programs:



*Figure 4. Model of Effective Instructional Leadership Training (EILT)*

*Principal Training Programs:* The EILT model begins with future principals entering principal training programs that have programs specifically aimed at training instructional leaders. Based on the outcomes of this study, these programs should include a higher emphasis on disciplines associated with facilitating instructional practice, including data collection/analysis, curriculum and pedagogy, instructional delivery, organizing instructional time, and delivering assessment and accountability systems.



*Embedded Practice:* The second component of the EILT model includes practice opportunities with instructional leadership that are embedded in the principal training program. Based on the outcomes of this study, these practice opportunities should comprise authentic school problem-solving activities that seek to connect pre-service leadership coursework with the actual practice of facilitating instructional leadership practices.

*Supplemental Training:* The third component of the EILT model includes supplemental training, which is defined as supports for facilitating instructional leadership during the first one to three years of a principalship. A suggested support, for instance, might be completing additional coursework and professional development that reinforces theory and best practices in instructional leadership. It may also include updates to new research or models that can enhance instructional leadership capacities. Finally, based on the responses of participants in this study, supplemental training should include mentorship specific to the needs of the principal and their school, as well as professional networks and cohorts.

*Measures of Proficiency:* The fourth component of the EILT model includes a measure of proficiency based on areas that are identified in collaboration with a principal's superintendent or supervisor, and should reflect areas of growth. In concert with the supplemental training, school leaders would be required to demonstrate proficiency in the identified instructional leadership practices. A comprehensive portfolio assessment that seeks to inform novice school leaders on areas of growth would seek to contribute to a growth mindset that encourages self-reflection and ongoing intentional professional development.

*Effective Instructional Leadership:* The final result of the EILT model, as illustrated by Figure 4, would be an effective instructional leader who can impact the instruction of students by facilitating effective instructional leadership practices for their staff. As indicated in the literature

review, the effective instructional leader would be able to set expectations, establish a positive learning environment, and facilitate effective instructional practices that positively impact student outcomes.

#### Future research

This study sought to evaluate principals' perceptions of their pre-service principal training programs based on the impact their training had on their current effectiveness as instructional leaders. Future research on this topic might examine the degree to which practice opportunities embedded in instructional leadership training programs must address the variety of individual school contexts in which principals will be engaged. Future research could also examine the barriers to implementation of effective instructional leadership, including its role in school management. Additionally, future research may further examine the specific components of effective and ineffective instructional practice preparation. The expansion of this research may include additional examinations specific to high school instructional leadership capacities. Leech and Fulton (2002) found that there are many similarities in the characteristics needed for high school and middle school leadership. Blase (1987), as cited by Leech and Fulton, identified several characteristics of effective school leadership that revealed that effective principals promoted positive interactions between school staff, students, and parents, with a cohesive cultural and social structure being critical. Their findings are consistent with the conclusions in this study, but there is a gap in the research that would distinguish between leadership capacities and skills sets of middle and high school principals. This research would be of benefit to the field, as the needs of adolescent children and children once they reach young adulthood are dramatically different. An investigation into leadership best suited for the enhancement of high school achievement is noteworthy.

In conclusion, a continued body of work that seeks to connect the theoretical aspects of pre-service preparation with in-service competencies would greatly enhance the training process for school leaders.

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**Appendix A:**  
**Interview Protocol**



### **Introduction - Defining Instructional Leadership**

1. How do you define yourself as a principal? What are your strengths and weaknesses?
2. Tell me about your principal preparation program. What did you like about it, and what do you wish you could change or add?
3. Have you heard of the ISLLC standards, and if so, what do you know about them? Were they mentioned in your principal training program?

### **Instructional Leadership: Defining Instructional Leadership**

4. The term *instructional leader* is used a lot in our field. How do you define instructional leadership? In your opinion, what is an effective instructional leader?
5. Based on your definition, what are your strengths and weaknesses as an instructional leader?
6. What are your future goals for growth in this area, if any?
7. How can principal preparation programs strengthen training as instructional leaders?
8. This is the definition of instructional leadership that we will use moving forward in this study (refer them to it). Do you think this describes a good instructional leader? Would you change it at all?

### **Instructional Practices: Defining Effective Instructional Practices**

9. One component of instructional leadership based on the ISLLC standards is that you have effective instructional practices. These are defined as communicating and enabling a school's vision for instructional practice, curriculum and pedagogy, instructional delivery, organizational time, and assessment and accountability systems (CCSSO, 2008). That's on the sheet that I gave you.
10. Here is the definition of instructional practices that we will use moving forward in this interview (refer them to the definition, read it, and ask them if they have any questions about it).
11. Do you agree with this definition? What would you add or take away from it?
12. Tell me about your formal training in this area, both pre-service and in-service.
13. Based on our definition, how prepared did you feel when you left your principal training program in this area? Was it the program or supplemental training on your own or both that trained you in this area?
14. Based on this definition (the one I just gave you), what are your strengths and weaknesses in this area?
15. How have you grown in this area since you became a principal? Is your growth from specific training, experiences, or both?
16. If you could revisit your principal training program and give them feedback, what would tell them to keep and what would you tell them improve in this area?

### **Establishing Expectations – Define Establishing Expectations**

17. Another component is establishing expectations. This is defined promoting a school culture in which all school members demonstrate their beliefs that all students can achieve their highest potential and that the staff are able to facilitate their achievement (Kirk & Jones, 2004; Lezotte, 2001).
18. Here is the definition that we will use in this area moving forward in this interview (refer them to the definition, read it, and ask them if they have any questions about it).
19. Do you agree with this definition? What would you add or take away from it?

20. Tell me about your formal training in this area, both pre-service and in-service.
21. Based on our definition, how prepared did you feel when you left your principal training program in this area? Was it the program or supplemental training on your own or both that trained you in this area?
22. Based on this definition (the one I just gave you), what are your strengths and weaknesses in this area?
23. How have you grown in this area since you became a principal? Is your growth from specific training, experiences, or both?
24. If you could revisit your principal training program, what would you keep and what would you improve in this area?

### **Promoting a Positive Learning Environment – Define Promoting a Positive Learning Environment**

25. Another component is promoting positive learning environment. Instructional leaders promote a positive learning environment by creating a learning environment that is free of chaos and disruptive behaviors. They promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff (Kirk & Jones, 2004).
26. Do you agree with this definition? What would you add to it?
27. How do you describe your effectiveness as a principal in this area? What are your strengths and weaknesses?
28. Can you describe a time when you were effective in this area? Can you describe a time when you felt less effective?
29. Based on our definition, how prepared did you feel in this area when you left your principal training program? Was it the program or supplemental training on your own that helped you or both?
30. How have you grown in this area since you became a principal? Training, experiences, or both?
31. What are your future goals in this area, if any?
32. If you could revisit your principal training program, what would you keep and what would you improve in this area?

### **Concluding Question**

Between the three areas we discussed, which area do you think is your strength? Which area do you think is a weakness? How have you tried to strengthen yourself in this area? Do you have plans for future training in any of these areas?

**Appendix B:**  
**Demographic Survey Questions**

## **Part 1: Participant Demographics**

**What is your age?**

**What is your education level?** *Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Specialist Degree
- ☐ Doctorate

**Please specify the concentration of your degree(s).**

**What is your gender?** *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

**What is your ethnicity?** *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ African-American
- ☐ Asian-American
- ☐ European-American
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Other:

**In what school level are you currently employed?** *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Elementary School
- ☐ Middle School
- ☐ High School
- ☐ K-12

**In what type of school are you currently employed?** *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Small Town
- ☐ Suburban
- ☐ Suburban Collar
- ☐ Urban

**How many years have you been in K-12 Administration?**

**What type of institution prepared you for formal leadership in K-12 schools?** *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ University
- ☐ University/District Partnership
- ☐ District Only
- ☐ A Non-University Organization
- ☐ More than one institution
- ☐ I did not attend a program for formal leadership preparation in order to become a principal
- ☐ Other:

**If you attended a university for formal leadership preparation, please name the university.**

**When did you begin the program? (Month/Year)**

**When did you complete the program? (Month/Year)**

**Did you complete your principal leadership preparation in a New Jersey program through any college, district, or other? *Mark only one oval.***

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Are you currently or have you ever worked in a New Jersey public school that requires students to complete New Jersey state testing in grades 3-8? *Mark only one oval.***

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Appendix C:**  
**Reflective Survey Questions**

The remaining questions address your training and practice with the ISLLC Standards. Please select one (1) for low, two (2) for moderate, and three (3) for high for each area.

	Degree of training in your principal preparation program	Current proficiency	Amount of use in your current practice
I collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision and mission.			
I collect and use data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning.			
I create and implement plans to achieve goals.			
I promote continuous and sustainable improvement.			
I monitor and evaluate progress and revise plans.			
I promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff.			
I monitor and evaluate the impact of the instructional program.			
I supervise instruction.			
I guide and support job-embedded, standards-based professional development that improves teaching and learning and meets the diverse learning needs of every student.			
I use or develop data systems and other sources of information (e.g., test scores, teacher reports, student work samples) to identify unique strengths and needs of students, gaps between current outcomes and goals, and areas for improvement.			
	Degree of Training	Current	Amount of

	Proficiency use in your current practice
I identify and remove barriers to achieving the vision, mission, and goals.	
I incorporate diverse perspectives and craft consensus about vision, mission, and goals that are high and achievable for every student when provided with appropriate, effective learning opportunities.	
I provide coherent, effective guidance of rigorous curriculum and instruction, aligning content standards, curriculum, teaching, assessments, professional development, assessments, and evaluation methods.	
I provide and monitor the effects of differentiated teaching strategies, curricular materials, educational technologies, and other resources appropriate to address diverse student populations, including students with disabilities, cultural and linguistic differences, gifted and talented, disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, or other factors affecting learning.	
I develop and appropriately use aligned, standards-based accountability data to improve the quality of teaching and learning.	
I guide regular analyses and disaggregation of data about all students to improve instructional programs.	



**Appendix D**  
**HSIRB Approval**



OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL  
REVIEW BOARD

## SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

July 29, 2016

Glen T. Pinder



*new address put  
on file*

Dear Mr. Pinder,

The Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board has reviewed the information you have submitted addressing the concerns for your proposal entitled "The Effectiveness of Pre-service Principal Programs on Instructional School High Stakes Testing Grades." Your research protocol is hereby approved as revised through expedited review. The IRB reserves the right to recall the proposal at any time for full review.

Enclosed for your records are the signed Request for Approval form and the stamped original Consent Form. Make copies only of this stamped document.

The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

According to federal regulations, continuing review of already approved research is mandated to take place at least 12 months after this initial approval. You will receive communication from the IRB Office for this several months before the anniversary date of your initial approval.

Thank you for your cooperation.

*In harmony with federal regulations, none of the investigators or research staff involved in the study took part in the final decision.*

Sincerely,

*Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.*

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.

Professor

Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Daniel Gutmore

Presidents Hall • 400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2641 • Tel: 973.313.6314 • Fax: 973.275.2361

H O M E F O R T H E M I N D . T H E H E A R T A N D T H E S P I R I T

**Appendix F:**  
**Informed Consent Form**



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES  
**SETON HALL UNIVERSITY**

Seton Hall University  
 Institutional Review Board

**Informed Consent Form**

JUL 29 2016

Approval Date

**Researcher's Affiliation:**

Glen Pinder is a doctoral student at Seton Hall University, enrolled in the Ed.D., Executive Educational Leadership Program.

**Purpose of Study and Duration of Participation:**

The purpose of this study is to investigate principals' perceptions of pre-service programs and the impact that school licensure programs may have on school leaders' success or lack thereof in affecting student achievement. Participants will be asked to complete a survey of their professional experiences and then to participate in one 45 to 60 minute interview session with the researcher.

**Procedures:**

First, participants will be asked to complete a brief survey about their experiences with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards during and after their principal training programs. After the survey, the researcher will individually conduct a 45 to 60 minute phone interview with each participant about their leadership experiences based on their training under the ISLLC standards.

**Study Instrument:**

Data will be collected through an initial survey that includes questions regarding demographics and professional experiences for the participants. Following the initial survey, participants will be asked interview questions regarding their leadership experiences based on their training under the ISLLC standards. A sample of survey and interview questions are listed below:

**Sample Demographic Survey Questions:**

Expiration Date

JUL 29 2017

All interviews will be conducted as phone interviews. An audio recorder and iPhone will be used to record the phone interviews. Participants have the right to review any portion of the audio recording and request that it be destroyed. Participants names will not be used anywhere during the interviews. Audio tape recordings and written transcripts will be stored on a portable hand drive (USB drive) in a secured space. Data will be included in the dissertation without personal or school district reference. All data will be destroyed after three years. Only the researcher and his academic advisor will have access to the data for this study.

**Risks:**

There are no risks associated with this study.

Seton Hall University  
Institutional Review Board

JUL 29 2016

Approval Date

**Benefits:**

There may be no direct benefit to the participant for participation in this study. However, the results of this study may offer resourceful information about principal preparation programs that can make them more effective in the area of academic leadership training.

**Renumeration:**

Participants will not receive any compensation for participating in the study.

Expiration Date

JUL 29 2017

**Contact Information:**

Glen Pinder (% Dr. Daniel Gutmore), Seton Hall University, 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, NJ 07079. [pinderglen86@gmail.com](mailto:pinderglen86@gmail.com)

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Daniel Gutmore, Seton Hall University, 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, NJ 07079. [daniel.gutmore@shu.edu](mailto:daniel.gutmore@shu.edu)

Institutional Review Board (IRB): Dr. Mary F. Ruzicka, Seton Hall University, 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, NJ 07079 (973)313-6314 or [irb@shu.edu](mailto:irb@shu.edu)

**Permission to use video and audio recording:**

All interviews will be conducted as phone interviews. An audio recorder and iPhone will be used to record the phone interviews. Participants have the right to review any portion of the audio recording and request that it be destroyed. Participants names will not be used anywhere during the interviews. Audio tape recordings and written transcripts will be stored on a portable hand drive (USB drive) in a secured space. Data will be included in the dissertation without personal or school district reference. All data will be destroyed after three years.